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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
*The Robinhood Society.*

IN WHICH THE  
ORIGIN  
OF THAT  
ILLUSTRIOUS BODY of MEN  
is traced ;

The Method of managing their DEBATES  
is shewn ;

The MEMOIRS of the various Members  
that compose it are given ;

And some ORIGINAL SPEECHES, as  
Specimens of their Oratorical Abilities, are  
recorded.

Chiefly compiled from Original Papers.

---

I will a round, unvarnish'd Tale deliver ;  
----- nothing extenuate,  
Nor set down aught in Malice.

SHAKESPEARE.

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for JAMES FLETCHER and Co. at the  
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TO THE

Truly Honourable and Highly Respectable

B O D Y of M E N,

C A L L E D,

*The Robinhood Society,*

T H I S

H I S T O R Y,

W I T H

The most perfect ADMIRATION of

Their UNRIVALLED ABILITIES,

A N D

With the Profoundest Respect,

Is most submissively

D E D I C A T E D,

B Y

The Author.

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TO THE

PUBLIC.

SEVERAL Pamphlets  
having from Time to  
Time been published  
concerning the RO-  
BINHOOD SOCIETY,

some in Vindication of it, and  
others against it, the public At-  
tention has been awakened; and  
many have desired to know the

A 3

Origin.



Origin of this Society, and to be acquainted with its Proceedings, from its first Formation to its present State. But no Work hitherto printed, has related these Particulars. Indeed, they have all been so remarkably silent on these Heads, that, like the brave *Irishman*, who, born of a common Prostitute, and unable to learn who was his real Father, concluded he had none at all, many People imagine, either that this Society had no Origin, or that it is so obscure and uncertain, that no Traces of it can now be discovered.

BUT this is a Mistake. A true and impartial Review of these  
Parti-



Particulars may be expected in these Memoirs ; and it is not doubted, but it will amply gratify the Curiosity of the Reader. If he desires to know from whence these Materials have been drawn, I shall inform him, that they were from Manuscripts of my Grandfather and Father; the former of whom was not only a Member, but the Promoter of “ THE SOCIETIE FOR FREE AND “ CANDYD ENQUIRIE,” for so were they at first called ; and indeed, they have retained the Title ever since.

As to the History of the Members of the ROBINHOOD SOCIETY, for 1764, that, indeed, is intirely  
my

my own Work. I have been obliged to no one for Anecdotes, but to the Members themselves; and I have, with no small Pains and Industry, as well as Time and Expence, collected from them such Accounts as the Reader will here meet with. Indeed, in a Work of this Nature, some Anecdotes, not founded on Facts, must be expected; Anecdotes invented by the Envy or Vanity of the Relater. But it is hoped, the Number of these is but few: For the Author, or rather Compiler, has, when he suspected the Truth of any Relation, not contented himself with having something new to say, as too many of our Biographers and History-Writers do;

do ; but has made the most diligent Enquiries of different People, to whom the several Members were intimately known, and some as School-fellows ; and from them he has learnt their real *Parentage* and *Education*, *Life*, *Character* and *Behaviour* : So that, in general, these Memoirs may be deemed as authentic and genuine, as, perhaps, any that have been ever given to the World, though they may not be so gaudily dressed.

THE Speeches I have given on different Subjects, as Specimens of the Members Abilities, are, in the strict Sense of the Word, *Original* ; for they were taken  
down

x      *To the* PUBLIC.

down in Short-Hand, at the very Time they were spoken.

THE Reader may now discern what he has to expect in this Work. And, without the Imputation of Vanity, I think I may affirm, that the Public will be both instructed and entertained in the Perusal of it. The ROBINHOOD SOCIETY has, of late, greatly attracted the Notice of the World; and is now so much frequented, that, almost every *Monday* Night, Numbers are robbed of the Entertainment they expect, because it is so crowded, that no more can be admitted.

To



To those who have often attended the Society, and are acquainted with the Nature of it, the Author of these Memoirs appeals for a Character of Candour and Impartiality; and he is confident they will allow, that his Description of the Debates is true and faithful, his Portraits of the Members just and striking, and the Speeches he has selected authentic and *original*.

HE will only add farther concerning this Work, that he believes no other MSS. but those he has in his Possession, containing the Origin of the Society and its Proceedings, till it was removed

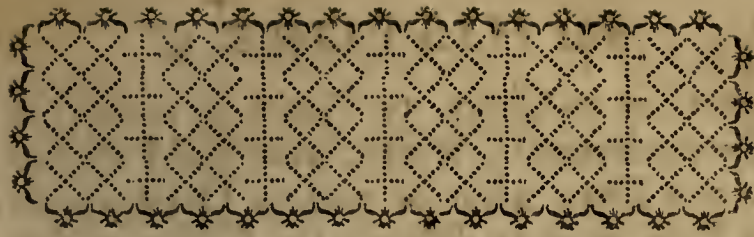
xii- To the PUBLIC.

moved to the *Butcher-Row*, are now extant.

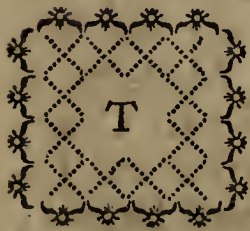
As then no other Person is able to trace the Original of the Society, and relate its Progress for no less a Term than 151 Years, (for so long it has subsisted) he doubts not but his *complete History* will favourably be received.



T H E



THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
*Robinhood Society.*



THE *English* have been characterised by many ingenious Foreigners, as a People that delight greatly in Clubs and Assemblies ; which they impute to a social and good-natured Disposition, and to a Love of Science. It is owing to this Disposition, and to this affection for Knowledge, that there is scarce a Town or Village in our Kingdom, but  
B what

what has its Clubs, or Places of nocturnal Entertainment; where, after the Fatigues of the Day, Men of various Occupations in Life, meet to dissipate the Gloom which has been spread by Study, or any intense Application; and, by a mutual Communication of Sentiment, either in Flashes of Wit, or solid Argument, to improve their Judgments, and entertain their Imaginations.

SUCH is the favourable Point of View in which judicious Foreigners behold our natural Propensity of forming and frequenting Clubs; and such their Description of the good Effects resulting from them.

BUT, I am afraid, that though some Clubs produce these Effects, the Generality of them produce the Reverse; and may be deemed Receptacles for the Idle and the Dissolute, where Modesty is thrown aside, like their Great Coats, and where Impiety, Obscenity, and Licentiousness prevail to the greatest Degree; where a Love of Laziness, and an Aversion to honest Industry are contracted; where the keeping ill Hours is encouraged, to the great Detriment of Individuals, and to the Prejudice of the Community; and  
where,



where, in short, no useful Subject employs their Thoughts or Tongues, but mere Noise and Nonsense, obscene Songs or Tales, and large Draughts of Liquor, form their Savage Happiness.

BUT, however true this Description may be of Clubs in general, it cannot be said, that the particular Kind of Club, resembling that of the ROBINHOOD, is of their Nature, or produces their Effects: Those are *Drinking Clubs*; this is a *Disputing* one. At those Places, Men meet to feed their Bodies; at this, they assemble to feed their Minds. At those, Intoxication is very frequent; at this, very rare. I could heighten the Contrast, but it is needless. The Perusal of these Sheets will sufficiently acquaint the Reader with the Nature and Tendency of the ROBINHOOD SOCIETY, and of Disputing Clubs in general; and therefore, without striving to bias his Judgment, or preclude his Remarks by any of my own, I shall proceed to my Account of “THE SOCIETY FOR  
“FREE AND CANDID ENQUIRY”, from its infant State, to its present mature Growth, at the ROBINHOOD and LITTLE JOHN, in *Butcher-Row*.

IN the Year 1613, when that fine Piece of Work, equally honourable and useful, the *New River* was completed, Sir HUGH MYDDLETON, who had a great Affection and Regard for my Grand-father, WILLIAM G\*\*\*\*\*, Esq; being in Company with him one Day, lamented it as a great Infelicity, and a vast Obstruction of human Knowledge, that light and trivial Subjects alone generally found Admittance into polite Companies, while important and weighty ones were excluded. My Grand-father acquiesced with him in Sentiments, and proposed it as his Opinion, that a Society might be formed to consist of a certain Number of Gentlemen, of liberal Education and acquired Accomplishments, to meet Weekly, at some convenient Room, to discourse on Subjects that would contribute to their mutual Instruction and Entertainment. Sir HUGH declared it was a lucky Suggestion; and he would think of it at Leisure, and let him know his Opinion of the Practicability of putting such a Scheme into Execution the next Time he saw him.

THE Intimacy that had, for many Years, subsisted between Sir HUGH and my Grand-father,

father, would not permit their being absent for any considerable Time after this Meeting, and the Starting of a Subject which had such Charms for both. My Grand-father was a good Speaker, and no bad Writer. In the juvenile Part of his Life, he had been engaged in mercantile Business in a very extensive Manner; and conducting his Affairs with Skill and Prudence for about seven-and-twenty Years, he had amassed no less a Sum than forty-seven thousand Pounds; with which, contrary to a great Number of Merchants, being contented, he retired from Business, and lived on the Interest of his Fortune. As to Sir HUGH, he was a Man of extreme good natural Parts, heightened and embellished by the Acquisition of the useful and ornamental Parts of Learning; and having, at the Expence of the greatest Part of an opulent Fortune, completed his darling Project of bringing Water from *Ware*, through various Turnings and Windings, to *London*, thereby supplying that great Metropolis with one of the greatest Necessaries of Life, he had now Leisure to consider of other Employments, and partake of other Amusements, not less suited to his Taste, and for which he was not less qualified. At the Meet-



ing my Grand-father and Sir HUGH had at the oldest Tavern in *London*, the *London Stone*, in *Cannon-Street*, over a Bottle of sound Red Port, and, while smoaking a Pipe of the new-found Plant, Tobacco, (which had been introduced into *England* by Sir WALTER RALEIGH, but about twenty-five Years before) they discoursed at large of the Advantages that might be reaped from a Society of judicious Persons, meeting once a Week to debate on Subjects of Importance. For an Account of the Institution and Nature of the Society, I am indebted to a Folio Book, which I have now in my Custody, in my Grand-father's own Hand-writing, and from which I have transcribed the following Passages.

“ It was here (says the good old Man)  
 “ that wee fully discoursed of the Affaire.  
 “ Sir HUGH declared the Number of Per-  
 “ sons that were to compose our Societie  
 “ ought to be limitted, and that they  
 “ shoulde not excede twentie; and in  
 “ fine, wee both agreed in this Point,  
 “ that wee woulde forthwith looke out  
 “ and search for proper Persons to be-  
 “ longe to the Societie, and whose Names  
 “ wee woulde enter into a little Booke:  
 “ And after that we had gained our pro-  
 “ posed



LET not the Reader think me too circumstantial for giving him the Articles which this Society of Disputants drew up and signed: Any Thing relative to the Institution of a Society which has since that Time made such Noise in the World, cannot be uninteresting; on the contrary, it may afford greater Pleasure to a curious Person, than the Perusal of the trifling Anecdotes that the most eminent History-Writers often swell their Works with, or even than many Papers that are obtruded on the World by a certain Society, who yet deem themselves great Philosophers.

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## ARTICLES and RULES

which wee,

The undernamed PERSONS,

Do hereby agree to abide bye, and to performe.

First, **T**HAT we do agree to compose and forme a Societie, which shall be styled and called,  
THE



THE SOCIETIE FOR FREE AND  
CANDID ENQUIRIE.

Second, That wee will assemble and meet at each other's Houses or Places of Abode Weeklie; that is to saye, at the House of Sir HUGH MYDLETON, the first Weeke, at the House of THOMAS VENNE, Esquier, the second Weeke, and at the succeeding thirteene Gentlemens Houses, whose Names are hereunder set, in the Order they there appeare, the thirteene next Weekes.

Third, That the Daie of our Meetinge shall be a Mondaie, and to meete at Seven of the Clock in the Evening, and to breake up at Tenne of the Clocke.

Fourth, That to answer the Ende of our Intentions, wee do agree, each and all of us, to write downe such useful Questions as maye from Time to Time occur to us, which shall be

coppied into a Booke, and shall bee debated on in the Order wherein they are set downe.

Fifth, That the first Thing to bee done every Mondaie Night shall be to read the Question which is to bee discoursed off that Evening, and then everie one that desireth to speake to it maie do it, but he shall not bee allowed to speake more than ten Minutes, nor shall he speake again 'till it cometh to his Turn.

Sixth, That wee do agree that noe Question that is professedlie on, or favoureth of Religion or Affaires of State bee proposed or discoursed off; for wee all are of Opinion, that the first is of divine Origin, and pure and undefyled, as set forth in our excellent Liturgie, and the taking on us such unwarrantable Libertie as to censure or to call in Question the Conduct of those whom the Kinge hath appointed to manage the Affaires of  
his



his Kingdome, is not a fit Matter for us to handel, nor a proper Objecte for the Enquiries of studious Men, who wante onlie to cultivate and to mende their reasonabel Faculties. Besides, it is slyng in the Face of the Kinge himself, whose sole Business it is to see his Kingdome hath proper and fit Ministers to manage the Affaires thereoff, and in Effect censuring him that he doth not see public Affaires better conducted.

Seventh, That it shall and maye bee lawfull to and for any Member of this Societie to propose any Person to belonge to it, but that the Name of such Person shall be delivered in Writinge to all the present undernamed and subscribinge Members; but no more than five shall bee admitted this present Yeare.

In Witnesse of these our Articles, Rules, and Agreements, we have herewith set our Names in our own Hand-  
Wris

Writinge this fiveteenth Daie of the  
Moneth of October, and in the Yeare  
of our Lord 1613.

HUGH MYDDLETON.

THOMAS VENNE.

WILLIAM G\*\*\*\*\*.

JOSEPH LEWIS.

SAMUEL READ.

JOHN DOWDING.

SAM. COOKE.

BEN. JERVIS.

RICHARD PALMER.

WILL. SOMERVILLE.

WILL. WHITAKER.

JOHN WHITAKER.

JOHN SLADE.

RICHARD READ.

JOHN GRANT.

THE

THE first Meeting which this Society of Gentlemen had, was the *Monday* subsequent to the Drawing up and Signing the foregoing Articles, being the 20th Day of *October*, 1613. At Seven o'Clock in the Evening, precisely, they all met at Sir HUGH MYDDLETON's Town House, which was in the *Strand*; and, after congratulating each other on their proposed Undertaking, and drinking two Glasses of Wine each, Sir HUGH got into a large Elbow Chair, and officiated as President, the rest being seated in common Chairs, placed there for that Purpose.

SIR HUGH then read the Question to them, for their Night's Debate; which was as follows:

*Whether the common Methods of educating Youth, in this Nation, are not very defective, both with respect to Morals, and a Knowledge of the English Tongue?*

THIS Question, the Reader will perceive, was a very good one, and worthy the Consideration of the most respectable Society. I might be thought unpardonably prolix,

*The first meeting of the Society was in 1613 on the 20th of October, 1613.*

*Sir Hugh Myddleton who died in 1631. lived in Salisbury Court, Cheapside, afterwards in Broad Street. - he had a house at Brook Hill, Edmonton.*



prolix, were I to transcribe the long Account which my Grand-father has given of the Debate upon this Question, and the many learned and ingenious Arguments produced by the several Members; yet it would be equally unpardonable, to omit the capital Arguments, and pass over in Silence the Manner in which this first Question of *The Society for Free and Candid Enquiry*, was handled.

Sir HUGH, after he had read the Question, asked if any of the Gentlemen present chose to deliver his sentiments of it to the Company. On which Mr. WHITAKER got up, and in a learned Speech pointed out the many errors, which, he apprehended, prevailed in the then defective System of Education. He expatiated on the Folly of the major Part of Parents of the lower Class, in sending their Sons to School, to learn many Parts of Education, which it was almost impossible, and highly improbable, from their situation in life, they could possibly ever have any Occasion for. He then pointed out the erroneous Methods that Schoolmasters in general made Use of, to introduce Youth to the Knowledge of the Languages; distinguished with great Propriety and Precision, the various Qualifications that  
ought

ought to centre in that Person, that took on him the arduous Business of fashioning the juvenile Mind, and instilling the Principles of Science; and shewed how these various Qualifications ought to be exerted towards those committed to their Care, if any Fruit was to be expected from the young Nursery. He then considered the Business of Education, so far as it related to the Morals of Youth: And here he lamented, that the most important should be the most neglected Branch of Education; that the inculcating the great Duties of Religion and Morality, should be look'd on as of such small moment, as to be totally disregarded; and, in fine, that the System of Education in general, left the Minds of Youth unfurnished with real Knowledge, and their Hearts uninfluenced by the great Principles of Christianity.

My Grand-father enforced this Speech of Mr. WHITAKER by some additional Arguments, and placing the others in a stronger and more striking Light. But the best, and most remarkable Speech, is that which was made by Mr. JERVIS, who was, as appears by my MS. at that time possessed of a Place at Court, which produced him upwards of thirteen hundred  
Pounds

Pounds a Year ; an immense Sum at that time ! This Speech, in my Opinion, is so good, and the Complaint he makes of the defective Methods of Education in those Days, so well adapted to the *modern* Method of Education, that, I think, I cannot do better than give his Speech at full Length.

“ THIS Question, Mr. President, is  
 “ certainly of the last Importance, and  
 “ worthy of the most serious Considera-  
 “ tion. The forming of the Minds of  
 “ Youth, and implanting in them such  
 “ Seeds as, when ripened to Maturity,  
 “ may bring forth much good Fruit, is,  
 “ in my Opinion, of more Moment than  
 “ any other Subject about which we may  
 “ interest ourselves ; and therefore de-  
 “ serves to be fully spoken to.

“ THE human Mind has been compa-  
 “ red, by antient Writers, to a Piece of  
 “ Wax, that may be moulded to any  
 “ Form, and is capable of receiving any  
 “ Impression, while it is young and pli-  
 “ able ; but when it grows old and stiff, it  
 “ is with the utmost Labour, and at a vast  
 “ Expence of Time, that we can imprint  
 “ the Shape of what we desire, on it.  
 “ From



“ From hence we may and must infer,  
“ that it is the Duty of every Parent to  
“ train up his Child to such Learning, as  
“ may in time qualify him to be a worthy  
“ Member of that Community to which  
“ he belongs: And let it be considered  
“ too, that Youth is the best Time for  
“ doing this, for the Reason before as-  
“ signed, and also, because such Princi-  
“ ples both of Religion, Morality and  
“ Learning, which are inculcated, or, as  
“ it were, engraved on his Heart, will  
“ grow with his Growth, and strengthen  
“ with his Strength, and at length will  
“ be written on the Tablet of his Soul in  
“ such deep and legible Characters, as  
“ Time itself shall not be able to erase.  
“ Consider too, Gentlemen, it is far ea-  
“ sier to learn good things, than to unlearn  
“ bad ones, which, I apprehend, there  
“ is some Necessity of doing, according  
“ to the present System of Education pre-  
“ vailing in this Kingdom, and which I  
“ shall now endeavour to prove.

“ In the first Place then, I think, that  
“ the true End of Education is both grossly  
“ neglected, and manifestly perverted by  
“ the Professors of it, not duly consider-  
“ ing the Difference of Genius in Boys,  
“ the

“ the different Conditions of Life in which  
“ they are placed, and the different Pro-  
“ fessions and Trades they are designed for.  
“ Education is like a vast Bason of fine  
“ Water, which belongs. to a large  
“ Town, and to which every Inhabitant  
“ has an equal Right; but every one  
“ that would receive the Advantages of  
“ it, must furnish Conduit-Pipes to direct  
“ it to his own Houſe, in like Manner as  
“ our worthy Preſident firſt planned, and  
“ has now compleated, the Current of  
“ *Ware* Water, to the Houſe of every  
“ Inhabitant in *London*. But if our Pro-  
“ feſſors of Education do not duly conſi-  
“ der the Capacities of thoſe intruſted to  
“ their Care, but furniſh the Heads of  
“ intended Taylors, Barbers, and Shoe-  
“ makers, with ſuch Branches of Learn-  
“ ing, as are not only ornamental, but  
“ abſolutely neceſſary in Divines, Law-  
“ yers, Phyſicians, or Gentlemen of  
“ Rank, who want to make a Figure in  
“ the World, then Education may be  
“ truly ſaid, like Water running to  
“ Waſte, though extremely good in it-  
“ ſelf, to be of no real ſervice to any  
“ one, but rather a Miſfortune to the  
“ educated Perſon; ſince the Length of  
“ Time employed in gathering Chaff,  
“ might



“ might have been much better employed  
“ in reaping Corn ; by which, I mean such  
“ Parts of Education as are necessary for  
“ such particular Person.

“ When a Person, like that I have  
“ been describing, arrives to an Age,  
“ when Reason begins to exert itself, and  
“ to blaze forth with a considerable Degree  
“ of Lustre, he finds he has miserably  
“ mispent his Time, in learning Things  
“ which can possibly be of no Service to  
“ him, and neglecting those which are  
“ necessary to his going through life with  
“ Credit to himself, and Utility to So-  
“ ciety in general. Before he can furnish  
“ himself with Pieces of useful Know-  
“ ledge, it is necessary that he divest him-  
“ self of some Prejudices which he must  
“ have contracted, and some Things  
“ which he must have learnt, while at  
“ School : And it is not less difficult to  
“ do these Things, than to gain new and  
“ useful Acquisitions, in travelling the  
“ Road of Science, and rambling in the  
“ Fields of Learning. Since then Sub-  
“ stances, not Shadows, Things, not  
“ Sounds, deserve the Attention of a  
“ wise Man, it is highly necessary, that  
“ Wisdom and real Learning, should be  
“ taught in our public Schools and Semi-  
“ naries.

“ naries. But it may be asked, what are  
“ Wisdom and real Learning? I answer,  
“ a thorough Knowledge of the Principles of the Christian Religion, and of  
“ the great Duties of Morality, and a  
“ competent Knowledge of the *English*  
“ Tongue. But neither of these, I apprehend, are taught. The dead Languages only engross the Attention, and  
“ excite the Care of Tutors and Schoolmasters: And, indeed, if a Knowledge  
“ of those Languages would facilitate the  
“ Attainment of Wisdom itself, and mend  
“ the Morals of those that learn them, it  
“ would be a useful and an ornamental  
“ Part of Education to every one; not  
“ only to the Prince, but Peasant; not  
“ only to the Nobleman or Divine, but  
“ to the Tradesman and Artificer. But  
“ I will be bold to say, these Things are  
“ not so, nor do they produce these effects. A Knowledge of the Languages,  
“ is not Knowledge itself, but a Key  
“ only, that being in the Hands of People  
“ of Rank and Fortune, or those of the  
“ learned Professions, may by them be  
“ made an Instrument to unlock and open  
“ the Chests of Knowledge, from whence  
“ they may load themselves with Treasure; but the same Things taken from  
“ these

“ these Chests of Knowledge, are not  
“ only of no Value to Men in mean  
“ Trades, or to low Artisans, but abso-  
“ lutely an Incumbrance.

“ NAY, we may go still farther, and  
“ assert, that the learning of some particular  
“ Branches of Literature, has manifestly  
“ a bad Tendency to encourage in the  
“ Minds of those Youths intended for  
“ Trade, such Notions of Things as will  
“ absolutely disqualify them from excel-  
“ ling in their Busineses; for, instead of  
“ endeavouring to become eminent in  
“ their Trades, they will be ambitious of  
“ being thought great Scholars; though,  
“ after all, perhaps, the Rudiments and  
“ first Principles of Learning only they  
“ have Capacities for acquiring. Hence a  
“ mistaken Notion of their Superiority  
“ over others in the same humble Stations  
“ of Life will arise; and the Pride and  
“ Vanity they possess, and which lead  
“ them to disdain their Fellows, will in-  
“ fallibly draw down on them *their* Con-  
“ tempt and Indignation, and the Laugh-  
“ ter or Pity of the rest of Mankind.  
“ By these Means, Men that might have  
“ become useful Members, turn Pests of  
“ Society, or, at least, mere excrescences;  
“ and



22      *The* HISTORY of

“ and thus is the Community robbed of  
“ the Industry and Genius of many Indi-  
“ viduals, whose Talents, if diverted into  
“ a proper Channel, and exerted on pro-  
“ per Objects, might have brought Ho-  
“ nour to their Country, Improvement to  
“ their particular Trade, and Profit to  
“ themselves and Family.

“ THE Care and Attention of a School-  
“ master ought to be immediately directed  
“ to these Points. He should endeavour  
“ to discover the particular Genius which  
“ every Boy possesses ; for there is no  
“ Boy but has a Genius for some Art or  
“ Science more than another ; and it  
“ ought to be cherished, and cultivated  
“ to the utmost. Many a Man, for  
“ Want of a due Attention to this Rule,  
“ now cuts a despicable Figure as a  
“ Poverty-struck Physician, who might  
“ have proved an ingenious Painter, and  
“ have acquired great Fame and Wealth :  
“ And many a dull Clergyman now  
“ thumps a Cushion, or reads a dull  
“ Composition to a drowsy Audience,  
“ who might have proved an excellent  
“ Cutler, and furnished the World with  
“ such Wares as might have engrossed  
“ the Trade in that Branch of Manufac-  
“ ture

“ ture to *Britain* alone, which is now  
“ shared by other Nations.

“ BESIDES, consider too, Gentlemen,  
“ that the Time we are at School is by  
“ far too long, and too precious to be  
“ thrown idly away ; which it most cer-  
“ tainly is, if not properly employ'd. No  
“ less than seven or eight Years is thought  
“ sufficient to lay in a proper Stock of  
“ Learning, even for the lowest Rank of  
“ People ; and what that Learning is, I  
“ have before told you. For my Part, I  
“ must pronounce it a most ridiculous  
“ Piece of Vanity, in the lowest Order  
“ of People, to have their Children taught  
“ *Latin, Greek, French,* the Mathema-  
“ tics, or any other Branch of Literature;  
“ which is not immediately necessary and  
“ requisite to them in the Trades they  
“ are designed for : And I would gladly  
“ know, whether, to weigh a Pound of  
“ Rasins or Sugar, to make a full-bot-  
“ tomed Peruke, to cut out a Suit of  
“ Cloaths, or to sell a Pair of Shoes, a  
“ Man that is illiterate is not as well qua-  
“ lified as he that understands *Algebra* or  
“ *Greek?*



“ I AM not, Gentlemen, speaking  
 “ against the Utility of such Branches of  
 “ Learning ; but I am for confining them  
 “ to their proper Learners : nor am I  
 “ to be understood as an Enemy to  
 “ Tradesmen and Artisans partaking of  
 “ the common Advantages that flow  
 “ from Literature ; but I am for limittin  
 “ them to such Branches of it as may be  
 “ for their own Good. What these  
 “ Branches are is very evident ; a Know-  
 “ ledge of their own Tongue, so as to  
 “ be capable of reading and speaking it  
 “ with Propriety ; a Knowledge of the  
 “ Principles of their Religion ; and a  
 “ Knowledge also of Writing and Arith-  
 “ metic : And these, in my Opinion, are  
 “ sufficient for People intended for mean  
 “ Trades.

“ I SHALL now, Gentlemen, shew  
 “ you another Defect in the Conduct of  
 “ our Schools ; and that is, an improper  
 “ Choice of Books. Sure I am, that a  
 “ great Number of Books now univer-  
 “ sally made Use of, are a Disgrace to  
 “ Humanity, and a Scandal to a Christian  
 “ Nation. It has ever been an Opinion  
 “ of mine, that without a Perusal of  
 “ HORACE,

“ HORACE, JUVENAL, CATULLUS,  
“ MARTIAL, in our tender Years, we  
“ might attain a thorough Knowledge of  
“ the *Latin* Language ; and we might  
“ understand *Greek* without learning  
“ ARISTOPHANES. All these Authors  
“ were great Libertines, and speak of a de-  
“ testable Vice, that reflects Dishonour on  
“ Human Nature, in such Terms, as shew  
“ their Approbation and Practice of it ;  
“ and I must declare it as my Opinion,  
“ that had such Authors not have men-  
“ tioned it in the Manner they do, the  
“ Vice itself would have been unknown  
“ to, and unpractised by succeeding Ages.  
“ Were there no other Cause but this,  
“ those Authors ought never to enter a  
“ School ; and surely, the Impossibility of  
“ learning *Latin* or *Greek* without them,  
“ can never be pleaded, when we have  
“ *Christian* Writers that have written on  
“ the most important Subjects, in a pure  
“ and classical Style, in such great Num-  
“ bers.

“ THE Knowledge of the *English*  
“ Tongue is of the last Importance to  
“ every one ; but this great Branch is al-  
“ most entirely neglected. We do not  
“ learn to *speak* it at all ; and how we are  
C taught

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“ taught to *read* it, I leave to every one’s  
 “ own Experience. In *Latin* and *Greek*,  
 “ which, perhaps, we have no Occasion  
 “ to make Use of above once a Year,  
 “ no Pains, no Expence, is thought too  
 “ great to make us Adepts; but to make  
 “ us speak *English* well, which we have  
 “ Occasion to do every Day of our Lives,  
 “ no Expence, no Pains are bestowed on  
 “ us.

“ In these several Particulars I have  
 “ mentioned, I think the common Me-  
 “ thods of educating Youth in this Na-  
 “ tion, are very defective; and, I think,  
 “ that Man who would point out a proper  
 “ Remedy for these Diseases, would de-  
 “ serve well of Society, and be justly  
 “ considered as a Friend to Mankind in  
 “ general. I shall mention one, which,  
 “ I think, would contribute not a little  
 “ to cure the Disorders that must inevita-  
 “ bly ensue from the present defective  
 “ System; for he must be a bad Man who  
 “ shews us our Unhappiness, and does  
 “ not in some Measure endeavour to re-  
 “ move it.

“ THE remedy then which I imagine  
 “ would be serviceable in the literary Dif-  
 “ ease.

“ ease I am speaking of, is, to compel all  
“ those who set up public Schools for the  
“ Education of Youth, to wait on four or  
“ five Clergymen of Integrity and Learning,  
“ to be examined with Respect to  
“ their Abilities, and to receive under  
“ their Hands, duly attested, proper Certificates  
“ of their being capable of undertaking that great  
“ Work, previous to their actually engaging in it. Were  
“ this to be done, the Number of School-masters  
“ would be greatly reduced; but it would excite  
“ a sufficient Number of able Men to engage  
“ in the Business of Teaching, as the fewer there  
“ were of them, the greater would be their Profit.

“ I COULD point out more Methods,  
“ Mr. President, to advance Education,  
“ but I have been already too prolix, and  
“ therefore shall trespass no more on your  
“ Time at present, but propose a Question  
“ on that Subject for our debating  
“ some future evening.”

How far these Complaints of one of the first Members of the Disputing Society, made one hundred and fifty one Years ago, were just, appears by the unanimous Applause my Grand-father has observed was



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given to his Speech : And how far applicable his Observations on the defective System of Education then in Vogue, are to the present, I leave to the Determination of every learned Reader.

THE subsequent *Monday*, being the 27th of *October*, 1613, the Society met for the second Time. This Meeting was held at the House of THOMAS VENNE, Esq; a Man of an immense Fortune, and great Erudition, at his House in *St. James's Square*.

THE Question debated that Evening, was,

*Whether, notwithstanding the Complaints made both by the Clergye and Laitye of the Degeneracye of the Age, the Moderns are not more virtuous and wise than the Ancients?*

IN discussing this Question, many learned and ingenious Arguments were produced by the Members, in Support both of the Affirmative and Negative Sides of it : But the major Part of the Society were for the Affirmative, and evidently demonstrated the Superiority of the then present Age

Age to any former, both with Respect to their Knowledge of the Arts and Sciences, and their leading more exemplary Lives. They proved these two Opinions, by the infallible Evidence of Scripture, drawing a Comparison between the Principles and Manners of the People of old, with the present, wherein the latter appeared infinitely more wise, and not near so wicked as the Holy Writings inform us the World antiently was. They then enquired into the Cause of public Speakers and Writers representing the Degeneracy of the Age in such lively Colours, and their being sunk deeper into the Pits of Iniquity and Ignorance than any former Ages; and they supposed it to arise from the Want of a Relish for innocent Gratifications, in those public Speakers and Writers; from their having been disappointed in their Pursuits and Expectations, which sowered their Minds, and gave them a Disgust to the World; and from Pride and Vanity, which swelling their Souls, and intoxicating their Imaginations, made them look down with Contempt from their own fancied Height of Excellence, on those they imagined so far beneath them.

THE next Time of their Meeting was on *Monday* the 3d of *November*, at my Grand-father's House near *Charing-Cross*; but I should be too prolix, were I to relate the Particulars of this Meeting, and the several Arguments which this ingenious Set of Gentlemen made Use of in the debating of their Question. I shall however inform my Reader what that Question was, and mention a few others, which were debated in their Turn at the Houses of the other Members.

*Whether, from the various Accounts given to us in Historie, we may not reasonable conclude, that Demosthenes was a greater Orator than Cicero?*

*Whether the Manufacture of Broad Cloth might not be carried to a still greater Degree of Perfection?*

THIS Question was agreed by the Society to be debated on again the next *Monday* Night, which was the 24th of *November*; and the Subject being, in their Opinion, of the greatest Importance, and not exhausted, after they had again discussed it  
that

that Evening, it was agreed that it should be a Subject for their Entertainment a third Night.

*Whether Emulation in brave and noble Minds, and Envy in cowardly and base ones, are not Acquirements in the Possessors own Power?*

ON this Question I must remark, that, however intelligible it might be at that Time of the Day, it is not so now; nor do I see what Purpose the proposing it could serve—no Debates appear by my Manuscript to have been made upon it.

*Whether the Improvement of our Heads and the Improvement of our Hearts, do not go Hand in Hand?*

*What Kind of Education is the most proper for a Nobleman, a Gentleman, and a Tradesman?*

*What Regulations or Improvements are needful to be made, in Order to advance the great Work of Education in this Kingdom?*



*Whether, if a Committee or Number of Gentlemen of acknowledged Abilities, were appointed either to draw up, or to alter the Epitaphs which, according to the present Method, disgrace our Church-Yards, it would not reflect Honour on the Nation, and excite a higher Opinion of our Wisdom in the Minds of judicious Foreigners?*

*Whether the Stage, under proper Regulations, might not be made an Aid to Wisdom, an Enforcer of Virtue, and a Supplement to the Pulpit?*

*Whether a Spendthrift or a Miser, is the most useless Member of the Community?*

ON this Question, my Grand-father made a Remark, which I cannot forbear transcribing.

“ A Spendthrift, says he, is like a  
 “ Grasshopper, and a Miser like a Jack-  
 “ daw. The former dissipates his Sub-  
 “ stance, and sings away his Time, in his  
 “ Summer of Life, regardless of what  
 “ may happen to him in Winter, and  
 “ not

“ not considering that wilful Waste brings  
“ woeful Want ; and the latter hides the  
“ Treasure he has collected, and which  
“ he can never enjoy. They both are  
“ Fools, and unfit for Society ; but the  
“ Miser, I think, is most so. The Miser  
“ is a mere Muckworm, a Dunghill-  
“ maker, that has brought together a  
“ Quantity of Manure, which, if pro-  
“ perly distributed, would enrich the na-  
“ tional Soil ; the Spendthrift, however  
“ an Enemy to himself, is the generous  
“ Hand that scatters the rich Dung, that  
“ doth Good to Thousands.”

*Whether the Difference of Genius, obser-  
vable in the People of different Na-  
tions, is owing to the Climate, Soil,  
Form of Government, or Education ?*

*Whether an hypocritical Sinner, or an  
open and audacious one, be the greatest  
Enemy to Society ?*

SUCH were the first thirteen Questions debated by the then infant Society, at their Meetings at the Members Houses ; the last of which was held at the House of my Grand-father.

I SHALL now take a Liberty frequently used by Biographers, and other Writers, that of skipping over a long Space of Time, in which nothing material happened in the Society, save that it increased in Numbers and in Fame.

FOR no less than eight-and-twenty Years was it continued on the same Principles, and conducted in the same Manner, as at its first Establishment, during all which Time my Grand-father, belonged to it, who has not only preserved in a large Folio Book all the Questions proposed, but also the Debates on those that were more particularly interesting, or which more forcibly excited his Curiosity.

FROM whatever Cause it was owing, I know not, but for half a Year the Society was adjourned, which was the Summer of 1641. I have been sometimes tempted to impute it to the particular Severity of the Usurper's Government, and the critical Exigency of the Times; but that could not be the Case, as the Meetings were again held in *October*, being at the Time of the dreadful *Irish* Massacre, when no less than 45,000 Souls were cruelly murdered;

dered ; though some Writers, for some sinister Views, or Reasons best known to themselves, have diminished the Numbers that fell by the Hands of the Murderers, more than two-thirds.

SHORTLY after their assembling together again, a great Number of Gentlemen of Rank and Fortune, having heard of their Fame, and approving their Scheme, offered themselves as Members : But the Society imagining that it would be extremely inconvenient for a greater Number of Members to meet together, refused admitting them, and declared they would not alter, or break in on their original Plan.

IN this Manner they continued 'till the Restoration of King CHARLES II. in 1660 ; and to shew in what Esteem they were held, I shall transcribe the following curious Anecdote, which the Reader may depend on as a Matter of Fact.

“ OUR Society now began to attract  
“ the public Attention in a very particu-  
“ lar Manner, and was so much discour-  
“ sed of, and so universally applauded,  
“ that it even excited Majesty itself to pay  
“ us



“ us a Visit. He was introduced to us  
 “ by Sir HUGH, who inform’d us he  
 “ was a distant Relation of his; that  
 “ coming lately from the Country, and  
 “ hearing of our Fame, as he expressed  
 “ it, was desirous of hearing himself those  
 “ Debates which the World talk’d so  
 “ loudly of. Now several of us would  
 “ have known the King, had he appear’d  
 “ in *propria Personâ*, but he had put a  
 “ Piece of black Silk over his left Cheek,  
 “ which almost cover’d it; and his Eye-  
 “ brows which were quite black, he had  
 “ by some Artifice or other, converted  
 “ to a light brown, or rather to a flaxen  
 “ Colour, and had disguised himself in  
 “ his Apparel and Looks so effectually,  
 “ that none of us knew him; and of this  
 “ Circumstance my good Friend, Sir  
 “ HUGH, was entirely silent ’till two  
 “ Years afterwards, being, no Doubt,  
 “ so caution’d by his Majesty.”

THIS little Anecdote throws a farther  
 Light on the Character of that facetious  
 Monarch, who, as we may gather from  
 History, lov’d a Frolic at his Heart, and  
 was never happier than when at some pub-  
 lic Entertainments, or Assemblies, of his  
 Subjects, where he might throw off the  
 cumbrous

The Duke of York who was said to have  
 founded the Society did so  
 he had a grandson named  
 Hugh who was killed in  
 the Battle of Marston

cumbrous Robes of Majesty, and give a free and natural Vent to his humorous Disposition. I find that he was so well entertain'd with the Debates of the Society, that he came there three Times more, and expressed himself greatly satisfied with an Institution, which, he declared, had so great a Tendency to enlarge the Mind, and to refine the Taste.

THE Society had now existed forty-seven Years, and of the Members that first form'd it, two only surviv'd, my Grandfather and Sir HUGH. But it being like the immortal Regiment of FREDERICK II. King of *Prussia*, supplied with new Members as the old ones dropp'd off, there was no Doubt of its Dissolution, especially as they took Care to elect such Men only as were possessed of Integrity and Abilities; for it was an invariable Maxim with them that none but such should be admitted, let their Station in Life, Age, Connections, or Fortune, be what they would.

FIVE Years after this Time, the dreadful Plague happen'd, which carried off no less than sixty-eight Thousand five Hundred and eighty-six Souls, Men, Women, and Children. Among them was my Grandfather,

*Exactly found in 1613  
This Paragraph says it had now  
existed forty seven years - 1663  
The first Sir Hugh died 1621*

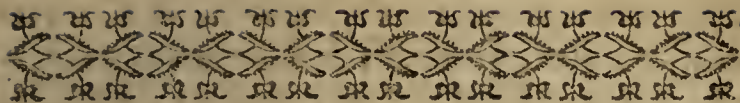
father, who, after being seized with it, and continuing excessively ill for eleven Days, departed this Life in the eighty-seventh Year of his Age, having for the last fifty-two Years been a Member of the Society for free Enquiry, of which he was the first Proposer and Promoter, and, with the Assistance of Sir HUGH MYDDLETON, the chief Establisher.

End of the FIRST PART.



THE





THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
*Robinhood Society.*



PART II.

✱✱✱ HITHERTO we have been  
✱✱✱ H ✱✱✱ enabled to compile this History  
✱✱✱ ✱✱✱ by the Manuscript of my  
✱✱✱ ✱✱✱ Grand-father. He has been,  
as it were, our Polar Star, by  
whose Light we have directed our Course;  
and if that Light shall be adjudged sufficient  
to reflect a Splendor on so obscure a  
Subject as that which we have attempted,



ted, (a Subject whose Original, Rise, and Progress cannot, I believe, be traced with greater Fidelity, involved as it is in the Darkness of Time) and to satisfy the Expectations of the Reader, we shall think ourselves very happy. It is true, that we could have been more minute in the Description of several Things; could have transcribed many Speeches of various Members on different Subjects, which we have entirely omitted; and have given *all* the Questions that were debated by the Society from their first Establishment in 1613, to the Time of my Grand-father's Death in 1665. But the doing these Things we have conceived unnecessary, since it must have been very dry and insipid to our Readers, a very disagreeable Task for ourselves, and would have swelled this History to an enormous Size.

WE shall now, in this Second Part, continue our History from my Grand-father's Death, till the Removal of the Society to the *Effex-Head* in *Effex-Street*, when its original Plan was alter'd, and its Conduct became very different; and shew its various Fortune, till its last Transmigration to the *Robinhood* in *Butcher-Row*, where it now continues to be held.

MY

MY Father, for some Years before my Grand-father's Death, had been admitted a Member of the Society, and was looked on as a very intelligent and worthy Man. He was not less fond of it than my Grand-father, and no less particular in transcribing from the Club-Book the various Questions that were inserted there, and the several Arguments that passed *pro* and *con* on the Subjects, when they came to be debated. This he performed in the same large Folio Book my Grand-father made Use of for the same Purpose ; and which being now in my Possession, enables me to compile this Work.

IN the Year 1667 the Society had some Thoughts of enlarging their Plan, and admitting more Members. They had received Applications from several Men of Quality, and great Numbers of others distinguished for Wit and Judgment, for their being admitted to partake of the Instruction and Entertainment which their Debates afforded ; but so general an Admission was deemed impracticable, on Account of the great Inconvenience the Members would all be put to, in their Turn, to entertain so many Persons, and there-

therefore such Applications were to no Purpose.

OCCASIONAL Visitants had been, however, allowed the Liberty of being present at the Debates, and to speak themselves to the Question if they thought proper. Restraint irritates Desire, and Things forbidden have greater Charms for Mankind, than those they are at free Liberty to enjoy. So proved it with those Gentlemen, who, though they had been present at the Debates of the Society, were not Members of it. Enraged to find they had not the Liberty of becoming Members, they deviated from the Questions they should have spoken to; and complained, that a Society that was not free for the Reception of every one in general that had an Inclination to frequent it, could have no good Effect, and that, supposing its Influence on the Manners and Principles of those that attended it ever so great, the Public in general could reap no Advantage from it.

IN this Manner the Society went on for some Time, and the Debates were a motly Mixture of angry Censures and solid Arguments, Animadversions on the Questions proposed, and Complaints of the  
narrow

narrow Spirit of the Society : So that the original Intention of the first Members was entirely frustrated, and the Satisfaction and Pleasure which must always arise from a reciprocal Communication of Sentiments between learned and ingenious Men, gave Way to private Cabals and personal Invectives ; which will ever check the Growth of Knowledge, and choak up the Paths of Truth.

To put a Stop to these Proceedings, one of the Members, a Man of a violent Spirit, and boisterous Disposition, proposed it to the Consideration of the Society, whether it would not be adviseable to refuse Admittance, for the future, to any Gentleman whatever, that might desire to be an occasional Visitant, and to make such an Order in their Book. And he gave it as his Opinion, that without doing it, the Society must soon fall to the Ground, by the Up-roar and tumultuous Proceedings which frequently prevailed there.

HE was seconded in his Motion by another of the Members, a Man of like Temper with himself ; who also gave it as his Opinion, that no Person, whatever, let his Fortune or Rank in Life be what it would, ought



ought to be admitted as an occasional Visitor. He observed, that their Society was of a private Nature; and that, for People to insist on pushing into their Company, and hearing their Sentiments of Men and Things, whether they would or not, was an unparalleled Piece of Assurance, and equally unmannerly with a Beggar, that, cloathed in Rags and Wretchedness, yet, full of a true *Hibernian* Impudence, would force his Way into a Gentleman's Parlour against his Consent. He expatiated largely on the Folly of first permitting any Gentleman to attend there who was not a Member, and observed, that though it was a Custom to grant such Permission, yet the Breach of foolish Customs is better than the Observance of them: And concluded, by remarking, that if they had, in that Respect, travelled on in a wrong Road for fifteen Years last past, there was no Reason they should still travel in it, especially as they had then experienced the Inconveniences that arose from it.

THE many Debates and Arguments they had at various Times on this Topic, at last produced the following Question:

*Whe-*

*Whether it is proper to allow any Gentleman, who is not a regularly chosen Member of this Society, a Liberty of attending it ?*

THIS Question gave Rise to many Arguments on both Sides, and produced no small Commotion. The two hot-headed Members I have just mentioned, were of Opinion, that no Man, however dignified or distinguished, ought to have Liberty of coming there ; and urged all the Arguments they were Masters of to support their Opinions ; which they did not do with the calm Demeanour of a venerable and pacific NESTOR, whose Words fall from him like Flakes of Snow, that melted as they fell, but with all the Fire and Fury of an enraged AJAX.

As the Issue of this Debate produced a Revolution in the Society not less remarkable, in Proportion to the Numbers that were affected by it, than the Revolution in the State that happened but two Years afterwards, I shall transcribe the Speech that my Father made on the Occasion, and which, he declares, made such an Impression on them, that they followed his Advice,

vice, in the Alteration and Enlargement of their Plan.

“ I LOOK on this Question, Gentlemen  
“ to be of no small Importance ; as not  
“ only the Well-being, but the very Ex-  
“ istence of our Society must depend on  
“ the Determination we make concerning  
“ it, and the Influence such Determina-  
“ tion must necessarily have on our Con-  
“ duct. It has been allowed, ye all  
“ know, for Gentlemen, recommended  
“ by any Member of our Society, to be  
“ present at our Debates. How long it  
“ has been allowed, I cannot say ; but it  
“ has been so ever since I have had the  
“ Honour of belonging to it. The Ad-  
“ vantage our Society derives from this  
“ Permission is not inconsiderable. It re-  
“ ceives a Lustre and Character from the  
“ Reports which our occasional Visitants  
“ make of it to their Friends ; and thus  
“ Men of real Genius and Learning are  
“ induced to visit us, and by their hear-  
“ ing our Debates, and listening to our  
“ Sentiments on Subjects of Importance,  
“ or Matters of Controversy, they are  
“ excited to give us theirs ; and thus we  
“ are mutually improved, and mutually  
“ obligated. Besides, consider that very  
“ fre-

“ frequently not one Half of the Members  
“ attend, and if occasional Visitants were  
“ not then to come among us, the De-  
“ bates would grow languid, and no Ar-  
“ gument could subsist. Those Gentle-  
“ men that are for having no Persons to  
“ partake of the Entertainment they may  
“ expect, and seek for here, but Mem-  
“ bers, seem to resemble an avaritious,  
“ covetous old Miser, that hoards up his  
“ Bags, and would have no one the bet-  
“ ter for them. Let us not be misers in  
“ Knowledge, but despise the Character  
“ as much as we do him that closets up his  
“ Gold. The worst Avarice is that of  
“ Wisdom; and if we really possess any,  
“ let us act like the generous Man, and  
“ the good Christian, that will commu-  
“ nicate to others the good Things that  
“ he hath, and give unto him that want-  
“ eth: If we have not that Wisdom  
“ which we may imagine, and without  
“ Vanity imagine, People think we have,  
“ and which they come here to partake of,  
“ they will, perhaps, give us some. Ye  
“ all know, Gentlemen, that in the Di-  
“ stribution of Things of this Kind, he  
“ that gives away the most is never the  
“ poorer for it; his Treasures are not  
“ the more exhausted: Then let us not  
“ be



“ be afraid that ours will be so, but rather  
“ hope that we shall be enriched by the  
“ Treasures of those that often visit us,  
“ and frequently come to us very oppor-  
“ tunely in the Absence of some of our  
“ Members.

“ ONE Gentleman has observed, that  
“ foolish Customs ought to be broke  
“ through; and that if we have travelled  
“ in a wrong Road for some Time, it is  
“ proper to quit it, and travel in a right  
“ Road. I allow it, Gentlemen; but he  
“ ought to have *proved* these two Things:  
“ He ought to have shewn that our Ad-  
“ mission of Visitors was a foolish Cus-  
“ tom, and that the Road we had hitherto  
“ travelled in was a wrong one; but he  
“ has not done these Things; he has on-  
“ ly given us his mere *Ipse Dixit*.

“ HE has observed likewise, that for  
“ People to push themselves into our So-  
“ ciety, to hear our Debates, is as un-  
“ mannerly as for a Beggar to push, with-  
“ out Permission, into a Gentleman’s  
“ Parlour. This I deny. Gentlemen  
“ that come here, do it by the Liberty  
“ that is given to each Member, to bring  
“ one Friend with him; and therefore,  
“ that

“ that is not a *Case in Point*. As to the  
“ Inconveniencies that have arisen, and  
“ the Tumults that have been raised, they  
“ have not been owing to our admitting  
“ Visitors, as that Gentleman has asserted,  
“ but to our not admitting more. And  
“ really, I am of Opinion, that a Society  
“ for free and candid Inquiry, ought to  
“ be a free and candid Society. But how  
“ can it be a free one, if Gentlemen are  
“ denied Entrance? How can it be a  
“ candid one, if we obstruct the Propaga-  
“ tion of Knowledge?—In short, Gentle-  
“ men, I think our Plan might be im-  
“ proved, and a very necessary Reforma-  
“ tion take Place; a Reformation that  
“ will put a Stop to all Manner of Distur-  
“ bances, and increase our Reputation by  
“ the Accession of more Members.

“ You experience very clearly, Gentle-  
“ men, that the chief Inconveniencies we  
“ are put to, is the Want of Room.  
“ Could we but get a larger Place, ca-  
“ pable of holding conveniently a lar-  
“ ger Company, we should neither be  
“ so crowded, nor would the Debates  
“ meet with such Obstructions. Besides,  
“ to speak my Sentiments plainly, I don’t  
D “ think

“ think that meeting at each other’s  
 “ Houses is at all proper. We put our-  
 “ selves to many Inconveniencies we  
 “ might avoid ; we suffer many Per-  
 “ plexities we have no Occasion to suffer ;  
 “ and we disorder our Family Affairs,  
 “ when we might avoid doing it.

“ I AM confident, Gentlemen, there is  
 “ not a Man among ye, how attached  
 “ soever he is to the Interest of the Socie-  
 “ ty, but dreads the Approach of that  
 “ *Monday*, when, perhaps, no less than  
 “ fifty People are to assemble ; and some  
 “ of us perfectly tremble at it. For my  
 “ Part, I must confess, that on the *Mon-*  
 “ *day* Evening the Society meets at my  
 “ House, I am the unhappiest Creature  
 “ imaginable ; my Wife dislikes it, and  
 “ my Servants detest it. I doubt not but  
 “ this is the Case with ye all, Gentlemen,  
 “ though your Respect for the Society,  
 “ and for one another, has prevented your  
 “ making Mention of it. The Method  
 “ of Meeting at each other’s Houses  
 “ might be extremely proper for the So-  
 “ ciety in its Infancy ; but I don’t appre-  
 “ hend it is so now. The same Reasons  
 “ do not now exist as might then ; and  
 “ there-

“ therefore we are not under the same  
“ Obligation to follow the same Method  
“ of Procedure in this Respect.

“ WHEN this Society was first institu-  
“ ted, which was fifty-three Years ago,  
“ there were only fifteen Members that  
“ composed it ; and no more were added  
“ to it for some considerable Time. No  
“ Member then brought a Friend with  
“ him ; so that the Society might then be,  
“ with great Propriety, styled a private  
“ one. But that is not the Case now.  
“ Our Number of established Members  
“ doubles theirs, and the Number of oc-  
“ casional Visitants that come among us,  
“ allowing for the Absence of some Mem-  
“ bers every *Monday* Night, at least trebles  
“ it. The Inconveniency that such a Num-  
“ ber of People occasion to a Family I have  
“ before set forth ; and therefore shall  
“ now deliver it as my Opinion, that this  
“ is a Grievance that wants a speedy Re-  
“ dress, and demands our Attention much  
“ more than, whether it is proper to al-  
“ low Gentlemen, not Members of our  
“ Society, a Liberty of attending it.”

This Speech was received with universal  
Applause. Even the Gentlemen that op-



posed my Father in the former Part of his Speech, could not but join with him in the latter ; and they all came to a Resolution, that their meeting at one another's Houses to debate, threw their Families into great Confusion, was improper in itself, and required an Alteration.

IN Consequence of this Opinion, the Society came to a Determination, of having their Meetings at some Tavern or Coffee-house, where they might be accommodated with a Room sufficient to hold a large Number of Gentlemen, and where every one, whose Curiosity excited him to attend the Debates, might have a Liberty of entering.

IT may easily be imagined, that in a City like *London*, it could not be a very long Time before a House possessed of such a Room was discovered. Indeed, many such occurred to the Minds of the Members ; but that which seemed most commodious, and best adapted to their Purpose, was the *Essex-Head* in *Essex-Street*.

To this House, therefore, several of the Members went ; and having examined it very attentively, reported to their Brethren,

thren, on their Return, that it would, with some Alterations, answer their Purpose extremely well ; that they had spoken to the Landlord concerning it ; and that he had promised to do every Thing in his Power to make it agreeable to them.

THE Society received this Account with general Approbation ; and informing the Landlord of the Nature of their Club, he fitted up the largest Room in his House, fixing Benches therein, so as to make it contain upwards of an hundred Persons.

THE Rules and Orders the Society had before observed, were now altered. *Before*, every Member had, in his Turn, defray'd the whole Expence attendant on the Meeting held at his House ; but *now*, they ordered, that every Member, and every Person that came to the Society to hear their Debates, should, previous to his Admission into the Club-Room, take a Ticket at the Bar, for which he should pay Six-pence : That every Six-pence so paid would be received by the Landlord ; in Consideration of which, he should furnish them with as much *Porter* and *Lemonade* as would amount to the Sum total received : That the Price of both those Kinds

of Liquors should be rated at Four-pence a Pot : That if any Gentleman chose other Liquors, he should pay for them separately : And that if any Money remained in the Landlord's Hands, after he had deducted, from the whole Money received, the Price of the Porter and Lemonade he had furnished the Society with, it should be paid to his Servants, in proportionable Shares, in Consideration of the Trouble they were put to.

THEY likewise formed some new Rules with Respect to the Conduct of the Society, and their Methods of Debate ; of which the following are the most remarkable.

“ *Ordered*, THAT the Society for free  
 “ and candid Inquiry, be a free one, and  
 “ open to any Person that thinks proper to attend it.

“ *Ordered*, THAT that no Person be  
 “ admitted a Member of the Society, unless he is elected by a Majority of  
 “ Voices ; and that no Meeting be held  
 “ for the Election of new Members, but  
 “ once a Quarter, which shall be in a  
 “ private Room, after the Debates of the  
 “ Night are over.

“ *Ordered*,

“ *Ordered*, THAT Religion and Politics shall be debated on in this Society,  
“ provided Decency and good Order be  
“ observed, both in the wording the Question on those Subjects, and in the Discussion thereof.

“ *Ordered*, THAT more than one  
“ Question be debated of a Night, if there  
“ is Time sufficient for so doing.

“ *Ordered*, THAT no one shall be allowed more than five Minutes to speak to the Question.

“ *Ordered*, THAT no Question shall be proposed to the Consideration of the Society, nor admitted in the Book as a Question, unless it is signed by some Name.

“ *Ordered*, THAT no Person shall be obliged to sign his own Name to any Question he shall think proper to propose, but a fictitious one, if he thinks proper.

“ *Ordered*, THAT in the debating any Question, the Proposer shall not be  
D 4 obliged



“ obliged to father it, or to open it by  
 “ explaining the Terms, and the Manner  
 “ he would have it considered in, unless  
 “ he thinks proper : But if no Person  
 “ owns the Question, it shall go from the  
 “ President, and be deemed as his ; after  
 “ which it shall be debated in due Order ;  
 “ the Person that sits on the Left Hand of  
 “ the President to speak to it first, *and*  
 “ *so on.*”

THESE are the most material new Regulations which the Society made on their removing to the *Essex-Head*, their other Rules and Orders being the same as before.

IT is impossible to conceive what Numbers of People attended the Society as soon as it was declared a free one, and Liberty was given to every Person to enter it, on paying Six-pence. No one Topic for Conversation so universally prevailed as this. It became a general Subject of Debate without Doors, as much as Philosophy, Metaphysics, and the *Belles Lettres* did within. From the Courtier down to the Peasant, from the hoary Sage down to the playful School-boy, Curiosity had extended her Influence, and excited Desires in every one

one to visit an Assembly of Men that had rendered themselves so famous.

IN Consequence of such an universal and eager Curiosity, Multitudes of People assembled at the *Effex-Head* every *Monday* Night, some as Orators, and some as Auditors ; some to be instructed, some to be entertained ; some to see, and some to be seen ; some to shew their fine Cloaths, and delicate Persons ; and some to criticise the Speeches of the *Effex-Head* Orators, and entertain their Mistresses with an Account of the Debates, and display their own Sagacity in distinguishing their Merits, and their Defects.

IT is not more wonderful for Critics to congregate at such Places, than for Rooks and Jackdaws to meet in the Fields of human Slaughter. A Critic that has not the Power of speaking a single Sentence in Public, is yet able to dissect the finest Oration of the finest Orators ; he can diminish the Graces of Elocution and Action, and exaggerate little Defects, with all the petulance of Pedantry, and Rage of Censure.

SUCH Critics are like Eunuchs: They have not Vigour nor Courage to act manfully themselves, and they envy and censure those that do. When they come into a public Assembly, it is not to partake of its Entertainments, but to seek Occasions of finding Fault, and giving an ill-natured Turn to the most harmless Amusements. They are like so many Hounds at a Carcase, devouring their Prey as fast as they can, and growling all the Time they are eating.

THERE was likewise a Number of these Gentlemen of a higher Class, the Writing Critics, who attended the Society, in Search of fresh Topics to exercise their Abilities, and amuse the Public. They knew that the Passion for Novelties must be gratified; and when almost every Subject had been exhausted, and every Field been so much traversed, as to render the Whole a common, beaten, and highway Path, it was necessary for those Sportsmen to turn out of the common Road, where nothing but common Objects, and Things that have been a thousand Times described, meet the Eye, and strike into bye Lanes and covert Places, where, perhaps,  
Plenty

Plenty of original and curious Game might he started, hunted down with Sport and Pleasure, and be at length cooked, and served up as a choice Dish for the public Taste.

THIS was the Case of the *Essex Head* Society. While it was confined within the Bounds of each Member's House, the Public in general knew but little of it, and the venal Authors of those Days, not having Intimacy and Interest enough with any of the Members to gain Admittance, were of Course disabled from informing the World of the Nature of the Society, and signalizing themselves, by striking into a new Species of Writing, and entertaining the Public with a new Subject. Not but of late Years the Race of Writing-Critics is greatly improved. Formerly, those Votaries of Dullness never attempted to write on Subjects of which they had no Knowledge; but now, grown more vivacious, and cultivating the finer Powers of Imagination, they can traduce Men whom they never knew, refute Arguments they do not understand, and pronounce Sentence on Books they have not read.

Nay, the Writing-Critics of the present Age, are so sagacious, that even the raw  
and



and undisciplined can form a right Judgment of every new Production, by reading only the first ten Lines; and as to *Veterans*, the Cooks of Monthly Hashes for the public Palate, they can discover an Author by his *Style*, and of Course know, in ten Minutes, whether they are to praise or censure his Piece: Though, indeed, to their Credit it must be observ'd, that they are not absolute Slaves to malignant Obduracy; for, after they have vowed to damn a Work and its Author to Contempt and Obscurity, a Beef-Steak and a Bottle of Wine have had a wonderful Efficacy in softening the Severity of their Dispositions, making them adore and cherish that very Work, which, without the Interposition and Agency of the Wine and the Beef, they would have butchered without Decency, and devoured without Remorse.

So much for Critics of every Species.— I shall now return to my History, and as I am too poor to give a Beef-Steak and a Bottle to secure it from the Reviewer's Place of Torment, it must of Course be ———, but no Matter.

As the Society was now declared to be free, and Religion and Politics, those inexhaustible Topics of Conversation, were allowed to be handled, the Room was crowded every Night, and Orators, like Mushrooms in a foggy Morning, started up from every Seat. The Exclusion of these Subjects from their Debates before, had, in the general Opinion of the Society, robbed them of much Entertainment and Knowledge. They, therefore, departed from the Maxims of the original Members, who had declared, that the Christian Religion being of Divine Original, could not but be pure and holy, and therefore not a fit Object for the Debates of Disputing Clubs; and that for Philosophers and studious Men, who wanted only to cultivate their rational Faculties by the Discussion of useful Subjects, to wade into the Depths of Politics, and to take on them the Liberty of scrutinizing into the Measures of State, would be an unwarrantable Action, and productive of no Good.

NAY, as it is usual not only with private Men, but with public Assemblies, to run into Extremes; so our Society now debated

ted very few Questions, but what were religious, or political.

TRUE Religion, they observed, like Silver seven Times purified in the Fire, appear'd the brighter the more it was examined into; and it was the indispensible Duty of every Man, to search the Scriptures, and to endeavour to give an Answer to him that asketh a Reason for the Hope that is in him. Nay, without doing it, every Man must be extremely criminal; since, if the only Reason a Man can give for his being of any particular Persuasion with Respect to his Religious Principles, is, that his Father and Mother were of the same Religion *he was*, and that he professed that Religion, because he was educated in it; then, by a Parity of Reason, a *Hottentot*, or a *Mahometan*, a *Jew*, or a *Pagan*, has as strong Reasons for his Mode of Religious Worship, and is as justifiable in the Continuance of it, as the Christian. As to the seeming Impropriety of debating on Religion in a Public House, and examining into its Principles over a Pot of Beer, they concluded, it was not only warrantable, but laudable, and infinitely better than doing it in private Houses,



Houses, where they could not have an Opportunity to instruct their Minds and refresh their Bodies at the same Time: For they insisted, that in all Debates whatever, more especially on Religion, the Conversation grows languid and insipid, in Proportion as the Speakers grow hungry and thirsty; and therefore, a Welch Rabbit and a Pot of Beer, were as necessary Requisites for a professed Orator, as Knowledge and Elocution, or even a Subject to harangue on.

As to the Admission of Political Questions, they observ'd, that in this Land of Liberty, where the Goddess herself reigns with so much Lustre, and infuses her cheering Influence into every Breast, it is absolutely necessary for every one who has the Good of his Country at Heart, to scrutinize into, and examine the Measures which are from Time to Time taken by our State Pilots, in the Management of, and steering the Political Vessel: That it is a Duty incumbent on every Man in a free State, in a Rank of Life, and possessed of Abilities beyond the Vulgar, to fathom the Depths of Government, and to point out and expose the hidden Rocks  
and



and dangerous Shoals, on which Statesmen often split: That as we are all Links of one great Chain, we are all interested in the Fate of each other, and bound by the most solemn Ties of doing our utmost, for the Support and Welfare of that Community to which we belong: And, that though to direct the Helm of State requires an able Head and an incorrupt Heart, Practice and Experience, Courage and Prudence; yet, it has been found, that as a Pigmy mounted on the Shoulders of a Giant, may be able to see farther than the Giant himself, so People not conversant with State Affairs, may strike out some Road, that, being pursued, may lead to Glory and Happiness, and make some Observations, of which those that have the Direction of public Affairs, may avail themselves.

FOR these, and some other Reasons *equally* cogent, they determined, that Religion and Politics should find a Place in their Debates, and employ their Attention as much as any other Subjects.

THE first Question they had of a religious Nature, was the following; which the Reader will perceive was as ingenious

as

as it was modest, highly emblematical of that Freedom of Enquiry which afterwards prevailed in that free Society.

*Whether Faith and Belief are not one and the same Thing? And, if so, Whether it is in the least meritorious to believe what we cannot help upon the Conviction of the Senses?*

ANTI-FIDELIS.

MANY Arguments were urged on both Sides, and Religion and Reason were banished to and fro by the various Disputants, as a Foot-ball is by a Company of Soldiers, or a Shuttlecock by the alternate Strokes of sounding Battledores.

THE Affirmatives strongly insisted that Faith was nothing but a Conviction in the Mind, of the Truth of any particular Doctrine, or Thing; that we could not help, from the internal Evidence we have of Things, to believe or disbelieve them; that in Consequence of our examining them, we form our Opinion, or in other Words, our Faith; and that since the Evidence produced within every Man's Mind, is more or less forcible, in Proportion as it strikes the Imagination, it is no Wonder

Wonder that the Opinion, or Faith of Mankind, should be so greatly different, and that one should firmly believe what another so strenuously denies. They alledged, that if a Man did all in his Power to arrive at a due Knowledge of Things, and in Consequence of his gaining the best Information he could, grounded his Belief, he was not culpable, let that Belief be what it would ; but any one that sits down contented with Things as he finds them, and believes them without a free and impartial Examination of their Nature and Tendency, is extremely culpable ; since he only believes what he has been taught, as a Parrot may prate what he has been instructed in. That to examine into the Truth of any Doctrine before we assent to it, is our Duty ; that implicit Faith is a Monster in its Nature, and worthy only of Papal Regions, where the Mind is fettered and Credulity and Ignorance stalk at large.

MANY other Arguments were produced, in Support of the Opinions of those ingenious Gentlemen, which it would be too tedious to enumerate ; the Result, however, of their Enquiries, and the Inferences they drew from their Propositions, were,

were, that Faith, of whatever Kind or Nature soever, was not in the least meritorious, and of consequence not necessary to Salvation; since it depended only on the Formation of our Minds, and their Capability of distinguishing with Precision and Accuracy, the Nature of Things, which accordingly influenced us to reject or admit, to believe or disbelieve any Proposition or Doctrine which came under the Examination of our Senses; and that an Infidel and a Christian, are alike acceptable to God, and useful Members of the Community.

I SHALL not give the Substance of what was said on the other Side of the Question, for the greater Part of the Speakers were those who disbelieved the Truth of the Christian Religion; and those who spoke in its Defence, injured the Cause they should have supported, and betrayed the Fort they should have defended, by their feeble and ridiculous Arguments. To refute, therefore, the Observations before made, would not be to record the Proceedings of the Society, but to give my own Opinion.



ONE Observation I must, however, be permitted to make. An ignorant Christian that pretends to defend Christianity against the Attacks of Infidels, is the greatest Enemy it can have. The Shafts of Ridicule pointed against it by its Foes, are too blunted, and the divine Shield of Truth, which Christianity has to defend her, is too strong for any Impression to be made on it. It must not be concluded therefore, that if, in public Societies, Christianity is not always defended with a cool and intrepid Spirit, against the hot Assaults of a whole Legion of Adversaries, that it is not defensible. Let but the pretended Friends of Christianity hold their Tongues, and it will defend itself; but if they open the Gate to its Foes, it is no Wonder that they should enter, and triumph without a Victory.

To give the Reader as satisfactory Account of the Society as I can, and to enable him to form an adequate Idea of the Members that composed it, I shall transcribe a few of the Questions they debated, and give a brief History of a few of the principal Speakers.

SOME

SOME of the Questions that adorn the Book of Debates, and called forth the Oratorical Abilities of the Members, are as follow :

## RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS.

*Whether the Ceremonies and Practice of Mankind, relative to Marriage, under the Mosaic Dispensation, were superseded, or set aside by the Christian Revelation ?*

JUDÆUS.

*Whether the Character of the Man after GOD's own Heart, is proper for the Imitation of People in these Days ?*

TITUS.

*Whether a Plurality of Wives, practised by the first Race of Men, is not justifiable by the present, as the Doctrine and Practice were not abrogated by the first Christians ?*

ANGLICANUS.

*Whether the Doctrine of the Trinity can be justified either by Reason or Scripture ?*

ANTI-TRINITARIAN.

*Whether*

*Whether a positive Command to believe in Doctrines we have no Conception of, and cannot compel our Reason to submit to, has not a manifest Tendency to hoodwink our rational Faculties, and to put us on a Level with Beasts, whom we command to perform our Wills without giving them any Reasons for our so doing?*

PHILO-LIBERTATIS.

*Whether the Doctrines of Christianity are not irreconcilable to the Reason, and repugnant to the Interests of Mankind?*

DRACO.

*Whether the Exercise of our rational Faculties, independent of any supernatural Assistance, be not sufficient to guide us to Salvation? And if it is not a gross Affront to the Wisdom of the Great First Cause to suppose the contrary?*

BRITANNICUS.

*Whether it is consistent with the Common Sense of Mankind to believe, that the Divine LOGOS, or Word, or Supreme Being, could be born of a Virgin?*

NEGATIVUS.

*Whe-*

*Whether any one is accountable to any Body of Men whatever for his religious Sentiments?*

CHRISTIANUS.

*Whether the Variety of Religious Systems, all pretending to have the Divine Authority of the Sacred Writings for their Foundation, does not warrant an unprejudiced and a rational Person to suspect the Authenticity of those Writings? Or, if not, to decline being a Member of any visible Church?*

CHUBB.

As these Questions are sufficient to shew into what Extravagancies Men may be led by the *Freedom of Enquiry*, some, though not expunged from the Book of Debates, are yet omitted here, as too impious and blasphemous to be repeated.

## POLITICAL QUESTIONS.

*Whether the Power lodged in a Prime Minister, be not too great to be entrusted with any Subject; and if, in  
Time*



72      *The* HISTORY of

*Time, it will not sap the very Vitals  
of our Constitution?*

ARISTARCHUS.

*Whether, if it can be undeniably proved,  
that a K— has broke his Coronation  
Oath, the Subjects are not discharged  
from their Allegiance?*

DUBITOR.

*Whether a Monarch, who loads an unde-  
serving Favourite with Treasures, and  
who hears and sees every thing with  
HIS Ears and Eyes, merits the glorious  
Title of a Patriot King, notwithstand-  
ing the fulsome Adulation and servile  
Compliments paid him by dependent Sy-  
cophants and venal Authors?*

REPUBLICANUS.

*Whether the great Snow we had some time  
past \*, attended with a smart Frost,  
has not had a wonderful Effect in freez-*

\* The great Snow here alluded to happened in 1674, and continued without Intermission eleven Days. Great Damages were occasioned thereby, Huts and little Houses were intirely covered, the Current of our Rivers was stopped, and Multitudes of People miserably perished.

*ing and congealing the Senses of some certain Ministers?*

SARCASTICUS.

*Whether a King, who, in a Speech he makes from his Throne, solemnly declares he will perform certain Actions which he never does perform, asserts manifest Falsehoods that are evident to the whole Nation, and endeavours to make his Subjects believe that black is white, and that two and two make five, is a better Monarch than Alfred or Constantine?*

ANTONINUS.

*Whether the Smiles of a Monarch can purify the Heart of a Gamester, or the Bed of a Countess sanctify Lewdness and Adultery, notwithstanding both the UTOPIAN Monarch and Countess are bedawbed over by venal Pens, and represented as Pious, Good, Great, and every Thing that is excellent?*

DUN SCOTUS.

*Whether the notorious Practice of the Ministry's interfering with the Election of Members of Parliament, and the Arts of Bribery and Corruption, so universally known to be made Use of on those*  
E Occasions

*Occasions, do not reflect Dishonour on the — that permits or connives at those illegal Practices, which manifestly tend to destroy the Freedom of the Subject?*

MARCUS AURELIUS.

*Whether triennial Parliaments would not be for the good of this Nation?*

AUGUSTUS.

THESE are some of the Religious and Political Questions debated by the Society, and from their Nature and Tendency the Reader is enabled to judge of the rest. He may observe, that the most abstruse, and the most easy Subjects, are alike debated on; those that the greatest human Faculties cannot reach, and those that the veriest Blockhead can understand.

THE Absurdity of such Questions must appear to every one. What can be more ridiculous, than for a Society of Philosophers and Christians to endeavour to explain Mysteries, to fathom what is unfathomable, and to conceive what is inconceivable? Such is the Pride of human Wit, and such our Delight in reconciling Paradoxes, and fighting with Shadows, that we neglect the Study of Subjects that are of  
the

the last Importance, and easy to be understood, and employ our Thoughts on those that are out of the Reach of finite Capacities, and which, could they be explained and understood, would cease to be mysterious ; for, as an eminent Divine has justly observed, a Mystery explained is a Contradiction in Terms, since, being explained, it becomes no Mystery at all.

NOR less absurd and ridiculous is the debating on Subjects that can admit of no rational Debate, or the least Doubt. Why should an Assembly of Men, whose professed Intention is to improve one another, propose a Question, *Whether Vice is Vice or not ?* For that is the whole Purport of the sixth Political Question before set down. That Vice is intrinsically Vice, in Subject or in King, can admit of no Dispute : No Power, no Rank, no Fortune can alter the Essence of Things, however they may gild them over, and conceal their native Horror. As to the other Questions, both Religious and Political, I forbear commenting on them : But I must needs observe, that I think the first are extremely indecent, and the latter vastly bold, to be discussed in a public Society ; to say nothing of the Application



that every one cannot help making when attentively considering the last.

I COME now to perform the Promise I before made, of giving a concise Account of a few of the principal Speakers in this illustrious Society: But as some of them are still living, instead of their real Names, I shall characterise them under fictitious ones.

POMPONIUS ATTICUS was a young Gentleman of Genius and Judgment, of a graceful Presence, and ready Elocution. But Fancy frequently got the better of sober Reflection, and hurried him into Inconsistencies and Paradoxes, which all his Wit and Learning could not support. He was, according to the received Meaning of the Word, a Deist; but, according to a true Expression of that Character, an Unbeliever of the Truth of the Christian Religion, and the Divinity of its Author. He had an Estate left him by his deceased Father, of seven hundred a Year, which he had mortgaged to almost its full Value at different Times, and dissipated the Produce in the Pursuit of fashionable Vices and Follies; so that, at the Age of twenty-seven, when he first became a  
Mem-

Member of the *Effex-Head Society*, an Annuity for Life of sixty Pounds only remained. A loose and disorderly Life generally brings on some Rebukes of Conscience, and some alarming Reflections. To prevent their Influence, returning Appetite and strong Temptation present themselves, and enlisting the Will under their Banners, Reason is seduced, and Conscience smothered. But, as under the most mountainous Oppression, these rigid Monitors will call forth, with a loud Voice, and bid their Master beware of the gilded Poison that presents itself to his View, and dash the unblest Cup from his desiring Lips; so, POMPONIUS feeling the dreadful Consequences of Vice, and attending to the Monitors within, resolved to reform his Life, and to forsake the Companions of his Wickedness. But this Resolution was but transitory: The first fine Woman he saw disarmed him, and he fell from his Heroism. A Continuance in Wickedness debilitates the Faculties, and urges us to defend what we practise. Instead, therefore, of leaving off the Practice of Vice, POMPONIUS began to extenuate it—to justify it—and to admire it. He now commenced a philosophic Rake, defended his Actions by Figures of Speech, and har-

E 3

rangued

rangued on the Expediency and Utility of Fornication, with the choicest Metaphors. He was now surpris'd at his former Pusillanimity and Doubt; and was clearly of Opinion, that the Practice of Whoredom was justifiable by Reason, that great Lord Chief Justice in the Court of Man, and tended greatly to the Support of the Common-Wealth. The Transition of this State of Mind, into a perfect Composure and Serenity in the Practice of Vice, is very quick. Before we have deviated from the Path of Duty, indeed, Conscience, that ill-natured Snarler, that Enemy to our Happiness, suggests a thousand Reasons for our Continuance in the same Road, and pretends to assert, that the pleasant Views, and delightful Prospects we see on each Side of us, are unreal, and a mere Mockery of the Senses; and warns us, with an earnest and a loud Voice, not to forsake the Road we are in, to grasp at Shadows, or to catch Butterflies. Nobly disdaining to be controuled by so rigid a Monitor, we quit the Path in which we safely trod, and turn towards the Bowers of Bliss, and Beds of Roses, where Syrens solicit our Approach, and urge us to recreate our jaded Senses, and refresh our tired Limbs. We comply with the kind  
Invi-



Invitation : We are lulled to rest by the soft Melody of ensnaring Voices : We enter the Bowers of Bliss ; we throw ourselves on the Beds of Roses, fully persuaded we shall there be happy——But, ah ! what Horror invades us, when we find Harpies and Furies are the Inhabitants of those Bowers, and that Adders, and Vipers, and Scorpions, lurk beneath the Rose Beds !

So was it with POMPONIOUS. But of the latter Part of this Description he experienced not the Truth, 'till Conviction came to him on a Death-Bed——Frequenting the *Essex-Head Society*, he was considered by all as a fine Speaker, and close Reasoner. No Christian dared enter the Lists with our Unbeliever ; but if, rash and impetuous, by Chance any one attempted it, he was sure of being foiled.

In this Manner he went on 'till he arrived at the Age of Forty, happy in his Vices, and perfectly convinced of their Innocence. His deistical Notions were confirmed by the Authority of many Writers of the first Note, and many Speakers of the same Sentiments, that attended the Society ; and they encouraged



each other in them, and from Time to Time entertained the World with their Productions, in Order, as themselves observed, that the Cause of Truth should be propagated, and Bigotry and Superstition be banished from the World.

A MELANCHOLY Sequel remains to complete the Story. Shall I relate, or leave the Imagination to guess at the Power of Sickness, and the Prospect of Death?——No; there is no Occasion. Suffice it to say, that the witty, the facetious, the learned POMPONIOUS, retracted the Opinions he had espoused, and declared that he *felt* Christianity was no empty Name, no Juggle or Trick put upon Mankind by artful Priests, to fetter Reason, and impose on the Senses, but a substantial Good, which its Professors may possess, but of which he could entertain no Idea, but from the Despair and Horror he felt from the Want of it.——These Things he now declared; but *where* declared them? Alas! on a Bed from whence he never more arose into this World: His immortal Spirit freed from its Imprisonment in the Body, entered the Regions of Eternity.

A VERY

A VERY different Kind of Being was that whose History I shall now give. GRIPUS was born of very mean and poor Parents at *Shiffnall* in *Shropshire*, who, with great Difficulty, brought him up to a Knowledge of Reading and Writing. At the Age of thirteen, he was put Apprentice to a Peruke-maker, and on his Arrival to his twenty-second Year, with eleven Shillings and nine Pence only, he set out for *London*. On his coming to this great City, and examining into the State of his Finances, he found he had one Shilling and three Pence Halfpenny left. With that Sum he determined to try his Fortune, and looked out for a Place in the Capacity of a Journeyman Barber. His Endeavours were crown'd with Success: He found a Place, and he was happy. Nine Months he continued here, and saved up the Sum of seven Pounds nine Shillings. It was a Fortune to him, and he resolv'd to improve it; but not in the Business he was bred to, for he found it would not answer his Purpose. With seven Pounds and nine Shillings only, GRIPUS enter'd *the Alley*, and took on him a Business he knew nothing of; but he had heard that small Sums had pro-

duced immense Fortunes in it. He was ignorant and illiterate to the last Degree; had no Accomplishments that could recommend him to the Notice of the World, or rescue him, according to all Probability, from that low and mean State he had been bred in, and was then subject to.

As Fortune is hoodwink'd, and regardless of the Merits of her Suitors, it frequently happens, that the Unworthy are admitted into her Temple, and receiv'd as her peculiar Favourites, while the Learned and Ingenious languish in Obscurity, or drag a heavy, galling Chain, condemn'd to Penury and Want. GRIPUS experienced the Truth of this Observation. With not a single Qualification that could intitle him to the Regard of any one, or rescue him from the servile and ignominious State he had been used to, he met with great Success, and abounded in Affluence; Wealth flow'd in fast upon him, while Men of infinitely greater Merit were sinking beneath a Load of Misfortunes, and patiently enduring the Frowns of Fortune. The *Alley* prov'd a real Friend to him, and his Substance continually increased. As he grew more wealthy, he was more parsimonious; and he seldom

feldom or never spent more than three Half-pence for his Breakfast, three Pence Half-penny for his Dinner, and three Half-pence for a Nipperkin of home-brewed, either at the Crooked Billet in *Shire Lane*, or the Welch Harp in *Fullwood's Rents*.

IN about twenty Years he had amassed together the Sum of Twenty Thousand Pounds, with the greatest Part of which he purchased an Estate in *Shropshire*, and laid out the Remainder in the Stocks. His Substance, like a Snow-ball, was continually increasing, and with it the Desire of more. Like the Grave, his Lust for Money was boundless, and he endeavour'd to obtain it by all the Means in his Power.

ON his Arrival to his forty-seventh Year, Curiosity brought him to the *Essex Head*, and Avarice kept him there. Six-pence a Night was, indeed, more than he had made it a Rule to spend; but for that Six-pence he might drink a Gallon or two of good Porter, and on the Days he went there, he took Care to drink none any where else; so that he justly consider'd,



consider'd, that if he drank but three full Pots, he was Three-pence Gainer.

It can scarcely be expected that such a *Genius* as I am describing, could be an Orator; but he was as good a Drinker as any of them, and though he could neither speak to a Question, or comprehend the Force of any Argument, yet while the Debates were held, he could amuse himself with his Tankard, and smoke his Pipe; and after they were finished, could for two or three Hours longer, smoke his Pipe, and amuse himself with his Tankard——and all for Six-pence.

IN this Manner old GRIPUS went on 'till the last Day of his Life, the Jest of Fools, the Contempt of Coxcombs, the Pity of Men of Sense, and the Detestation of his Relations; though, indeed, these latter being needy, paid him some Court, and shewed him some Respect, which his Wealth, not his Merit, extorted; mere  
 “ Mouth-Honour, which the poor Heart  
 “ would fain have denied.”

GRIPUS had many Relations, who stood in Need of his Bounty; but, insensible

sible to every Thing but the Lust of Money, dead to all the social Feelings of the Soul, he cared not a Straw if his Kindred and all Mankind were at the Bottom of the Sea, so that he could stand safely on Land, survey the Scene, and, like a *Sussex* or *Cornish* Savage, pillage the Wreck.

A LENGTH of Years, however, weigh'd him down at last, and he fell ill. Death was written in his Face, and he was pronounced incurable. The Landlord, in whose House he had for many Years lodged by Way of Cheapness, had Two Hundred Pounds in his Hands belonging to GRIPUS ; and this Sum, he determin'd, by some Artifice, to appropriate to his own Use. How this was to be obtain'd, was the grand Question, and well worthy the Contriver's Genius. WILL was no less a Miser than GRIPUS, and had, by keeping a mean, beggarly Coffee-House, in a dirty Lane, saved up Three or Four Thousand Pounds ; but he consider'd, that Two Hundred would be a good Addition to it. The Scheme being at length duly adjusted, WILL made his Appearance before GRIPUS, attended by two Witnesses, who were to stand concealed, hear the Discourse, and, if necessary, give in

in Evidence of it. “ I have Two Hundred Pounds of yours in my Hands, “ Mr. GRIPUS, said WILL, and I want “ to know what I must do with it.” GRIPUS, rack’d with Pain, and scarce sensible of any Thing, replied, “ Keep “ it yourself.” A Wink of the Eye, and a Projection of the Hand, now were necessary, to bring the two Witnesses forward. They came. “ What must I “ do with the Two Hundred Pounds, Mr. “ GRIPUS? As you are now, in all Probability, on a Death-bed, it is best to “ settle these Affairs.”——“ You may “ keep it yourself, answer’d the sick “ Man.” “ Then you give and bestow “ the Two Hundred Pounds on me, “ don’t you?”——“ I do, reply’d he.” This was sufficient. WILL hasten’d down Stairs, had an Affidavit drawn of the Legacy given him, and in a short Time after GRIPUS expired; That GRIPUS who lived despised and hated, and died unlamented.

ANOTHER Member of the Society, was Father MURTAGH O’FLAHERTY, a Popish Priest. *Ireland* gave him Birth, *St. Omer’s* Education, and *England* a good Income. He had for a long Time,  
after

after his Return from St. Omer's, resided in the North of *Ireland*, and was look'd on as a very learned and able Divine. The Aged revered him for his Judgment; and the Youthful for his gay and lively Disposition, freed from the Austerity and Rigour that frequently make Wisdom odious. MURTAGH would demonstrate with the greatest Clearness, that Mirth and Cheerfulness were not in the least inconsistent with Religion; that a Bottle of good Claret fortified the Body, and raised the Spirits; and that the Joys which a good Tavern and boon Companions afford, were not to be despised by Men of Sense.

IN Consequence of this natural Propensity, this longing Desire to be happy, and to make others so, Father MURTAGH would frequent Clubs, and sing Catches, speak Speeches, drink Toasts, break Glasses, and tell merry Stories, with any one: And though some rigid Priests, and severe Moralists, would censure him behind his Back for his immoral Conduct, as they term'd it, yet, when he appear'd before them, he had such a pretty Way, such a forcible Method of vindicating his Behaviour, and winning their Affections, that they



they could not find in their Hearts to blame him.

BUT, with such Accomplishments, if he was a Favourite of the Men, what must he be with the Women? They perfectly idolized him, and, in Return, Father MURTAGH had no less Passion and Veneration for them. Indeed, there was another Circumstance, which, though it may be deem'd a Trifle by some Folks, had a wonderful Effect in forcing the Affections of the Fair. As he acted in the Character of a Confessor, to rivet the Esteem of his Penitents, he used Lenity instead of Severity, and in Cases where some Confessors would have scourged with a Rod of Iron, he rebuked with the Mildness of a Father, and exhorted them to a contrary Conduct, if they would avoid his just Indignation. These lenient and gentle Methods prevail'd where rough and violent ones would not. The human Mind is rather won by Entreaty, than dragged by Force, and receives Conviction from a Friend that soothes its Anguish, and makes Allowance for its Frailties; when, by a contrary Conduct, venial Error might rise to Guilt, and youthful Indulgence

dulgence terminate in confirmed Wickedness and obstinate Villainy.

FATHER MURTAGH being such a professed Admirer of the Fair, and treating them with such Mildness, he had so won their Hearts, that they resounded his Praises continually. They insisted on it, he was the best Priest in the Kingdom, the most learned and judicious Man, and infinitely the best qualified to be a Confessor. In short, they would confess to no one but Father MURTAGH. Father MURTAGH was the universal Cry.

THIS Trade continued so long, that a Conspiracy was formed by his envious Brethren against his Monopoly, and by Force of Bribes and Numbers, he fell a Victim to popular Wrath, and priestly Artifice.

FOR a long Time the good Man, poor and friendless, wandered about, a melancholy Proof of the unhappy Fate that may attend Men of the greatest Parts, and of the Want of Gratitude for past Favours, when the Power of continuing them is taken away.

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FINDING he could scarcely support himself in *Ireland*, he came to *London*, and soon formed an Acquaintance with many People of his own Religion. An *Irish* Roman Catholick Priest need never fear wanting a Beef-Steak and a Pot of Porter for his Dinner in *London*: Nay, he need not fear wanting Venison or Ortolans, and good Claret. There are Abundance of Papists in this City, who regard their Priests as so many Demi-Gods, and who will think themselves as highly honoured with their Presence at Dinner or Supper, as BAUCIS and PHILEMON thought themselves by the Presence of their heavenly Guest; and in consequence of this Opinion, the Markets are ransacked for the choicest Viands, and the Wine Vaults for the best Wines, to entertain them. As stolen Interviews between Lovers are the sweetest, so the Necessity the Roman Catholic Clergy are under to keep themselves concealed, in order to gain Profelytes, and pervert the People to their Religion, give a Relish to their Entertainments which they would otherwise want.

FATHER MURTAGH soon saved up a good deal of Money, and lived as elegantly  
as

as his Heart could wish. He attended every *Monday* night at the *Essex-Head*, spoke to the Questions in the Character of a Protestant, yet could not help betraying the cloven Foot on some Occasions. After the Debates of the Evening were over, and the Company entered into private Conferences with each other, Father *Murtagh* would single out that Person whom he conceived most fit for his Purpose, and use the greatest Industry and exert all his Abilities, to depreciate the established Religion of this Kingdom, and extol that of the Roman Catholic, and his Endeavours were often successful.

HE is now very old, and having for many Years attended at the *Essex-Head Society*, he comes to the *Robinhood*; but not constantly, on Account of his Age and Infirmities.

BOB SCAMPER was a Man very different from the three I have been describing: BOB was born in the West of *England*, and was reckoned a Youth of enterprising Genius, and ready Parts. At the Age of eighteen he came to *London*, and having spent the five Guineas he brought up with him on Women of the Town,  
was



was greatly at a Loss to what to betake himself. Poverty stared him in the Face, and tho' he had some good natural Parts, and a great Assurance, yet having no Learning, he could get no genteel Employment. His Female associates, however, soon furnished Hints, which a Lad of his ready Wit and enterprising Spirit, easily understood, and as intrepidly executed. He turned Collector on the Road, and having Success, rioted in the Spoils he had taken, and with his Girls enjoyed all the Happiness he desired: Not but that sometimes it was dashed with some Remorse, and the Dread of the fatal Consequences that might ensue. But Excess of drinking, the Company of Libertines, and the Conversation of his Women, dispersed the Clouds that obscured his Happiness, and confirmed him in the Resolution he had taken to plunder and rob the Public, and to gain a Livelihood by the bold Hands of Violence.

A CONTINUANCE in Wickedness familiarises the Mind to it, and what at first a Man would start even to think of, he at length practises without Horror. All Guilt is progressive: We go not at once, but Step by Step, into the Extremes of Vice; and tho' it is impossible to silence the Cries  
of

of Conscience, and to stifle the Dictates of Reason all at once, yet an habitual Violation of their Admonitions, brings us to an Insensibility of the Horror of our Crimes, and renders us quite callous to the Sense of Shame, and deaf to every Thing but the importunate Cravings of sensual Appetite.

BOB SCAMPER experienced the Truth of these Observations. In the Day-Time he mounted his Horse, and robbed on the Highway with the same Composure, as any other Man follows *his* customary Occupation, and at Night he spent the ill-got Treasure among Whores and Thieves, the Encouragers of his Wickedness, and the Sharers of his Spoils.

THIS was a worthy Member of a Society that met to improve themselves by free and candid Inquiry; but Captain SCAMPER, as he was intitled, was well received by all. He was a tall handsome Fellow, endued with a Power of Face that disdained a Blush, and though not wise was witty, though not learned was ingenious, and had a Power of imposing on the Understandings of those he conversed with, and making them believe him to be what he was not. He dressed well, had a free  
and

and *degagée* Air, wanted not Words, and addressed the Passions of those he conversed with, with such Skill and Success, that you could not help giving him Credit for much more Understanding than he possessed.

THERE are two Kinds of People that are better thought of in most Companies, than their intrinsic Merit deserves: These are the solemn Prig, and well-dressed Coxcomb. The first, by the Help of a full-trimmed grave Suit, and a large Peruque, a sagacious Look, and a slow Delivery, shall make you take him for a second SOLON. The most unmeaning Speech, the tritest Observation, the most superficial Hint, delivered in a dry, yet important, slow but solemn Tone, and enforced by some shakes of the Head, shrugs of the Shoulders, and significant Hand-Oratory, shall be received as the Dictates of Wisdom, and procure the Speaker the Character of the SOLOMON of the Age.

THE other, aided by his Taylor, Mil-  
lener, and Barber, tho' he gives Vent to  
the Fulness of his Soul only by dry Jokes,  
and insipid Remarks, is yet listened to with  
Atten-



Attention, and heard with Pleasure. No one will dare to contradict the Assertions of a Wit, with laced Cloaths, Bag-Wig, and a Sword; and thus Folly is received for Wisdom, and vivacious Impudence for Genius.

SCAMPER was to be ranked in this second Class of Orators. He spoke to every Question, and tho' what he said had no great Depth or much Meaning in it, yet being delivered from the Mouth of a Man that was extremely well dressed, and with no bad Accent or ill Grace, it was always well received, and the Speaker was considered as a very great *Genius*, and an Ornament to the Society.

BUT this Ornament of the Society did not last above five Years and a Half. He had committed a Robbery on *Hounslow-Heath*, and taken a Booty of no less than three Hundred Guineas. The Gentleman he had robbed, happened accidentally to come to the *Essex-Head* one Monday Evening, and the Moment he entered the Room, Captain SCAMPER had got up to speak to the Question. The Question was

*Whether*



*Whether the Doctrine of Repentance  
taught by the Christian Religion, has  
not a manifest Tendency to encourage  
Wickedness?*      DEISTICUS.

SCAMPER, after desiring the President to read the Question again, spoke to it in the best Manner he could. He vindicated Christianity in general, and demonstrated that all its Doctrines tended to the Support of Morality, by discountenancing all Manner of Vice. He shewed its superior Excellency over all the Religions that had ever appeared in the World; he proved the Authenticity of the Sacred Writings, and defied the Deists, with all their Ingenuity, to point out any Defects in them. He observed of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, that as it comprehended in one concise View, all the Doctrines and Precepts of Christianity, so it was the most sublime System of Ethics in the World. He took Notice, that not only the Philosophers and Sages of the Heathen World, considered abstractedly, were unable to form a complete System of moral Duties, but that all their Writings put together were insufficient to form such a System, and that if all their Morality was  
to

to be extracted, that is, all their Excellencies to be reduced into a System, it would still be an imperfect one. He then spoke more immediately to the Question, and delivered it as his Opinion, that the Doctrine of Repentance, as taught by the established Church, of which, he said, he was not ashamed to own himself a Member, so far from encouraging Wickedness, had the greatest Tendency imaginable to annihilate it; for he observed, that the Repentance taught in the Gospel, is not merely a Sorrow for our past Sins, but likewise a Resolution of reforming our Conduct for the future. As to the Objection that had been brought by a Deist, who observed, that Repentance was no Atonement, he said, it was very true, if we speak as Deists, but if we believe as Christians, it must be looked on as an Atonement, since GOD, in those Books which Christians believe were written by his Inspiration, has been graciously pleased to declare, he will receive it as such. Our Duty he observed, without Doubt, it was always incumbent on us to practise; and after the Commission of the greatest Sins, and our sincere Repentance of them, we perform no more than our Duty, by living a Righteous and a Holy Life: But as the Deity had declared to

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every

every one, even the greatest of Sinners, that though his Crimes were as red as Scarlet, yet by Repentance the should be made as white as Snow ; it is certainly a Doctrine that encourages the Soul, and supports it under the Reproaches of Conscience, that would otherwise whip us with her Scorpions, and throw us into the Agonies of Despair and Horror. He concluded, by drawing a Contrast between the Repentance of the Protestant, and the Absolution of the Roman Catholic Church ; and insisted, that the former tended to our spiritual and temporal Welfare, and the latter to the Destruction of both.

DURING all the Time this great Advocate for Religion and Morality was speaking, the Gentleman eyed him attentively, and thought he had seen him somewhere before. He went up close to him, and after a minute examination of his Person and Manner, at length recollected that it was on *Hounslow-Heath* he had the Misfortune to have seen him. Without saying any Thing to him, or to the Company, he withdrew, and in about a Quarter of an Hour returned with his Servant, who was present at the Robbery, and with a Constable, who was to take Care of SCAMPER,

PER, if the Servant agreed with his Master in the Identity of the Person.

THE Servant had no sooner entered the Room, than, without his Master's pointing the Object out, he swore that the tall Gentleman in laced Cloaths, near the President, was the Man that robbed his Master on *Hounslow-Heath*. This was sufficient. The Constable went up to him, and tapping him on the Shoulder, said, he should be glad to speak to him. The Captain obeyed, and they withdrew out of the Disputing-Room, attended by the Gentleman and his Servant. They had no sooner reached the Stairs, than SCAMPER wanted to know the Gentleman's Commands. "Oh, says the Constable, there is a Coach waiting at the Door, and if you'll enter it, you'll know presently." SCAMPER declin'd it, but the Constable was importunate, and being somewhat irritated at his Obstinacy, told him he *must* enter it. The Captain stared, bit his Lips, and was mute. The Gentleman and his Servant now came up, and the latter opening the Coach-Door, waited for his Master to enter. But he was too complaisant to go in before the Captain, and bowing to him, asked him to go in

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first.



first. The Captain still declin'd it, and they insisted on it in a higher Tone, and declar'd that he should go whether he would or not. Already was half the Captain's Sword out of the Scabbard, and he had resolv'd to resist their utmost Efforts, when a Whistle from the Constable made him stare, and of a Sudden suspend his Action. Immediately three strapping Fellows came up, and the Constable pointing to SCAMPER, and telling them to do their Duty, they took away his Sword, hurried him into the Coach, the Gentleman, his Servant, and the Constable following, and drove off to Justice DE VEIL's.

I SHALL not multiply Words. The Gentleman and his Servant swore positively that he was the Person that robb'd them on *Hounslow Heath*. He was search'd. A Powder Horn, a Pair of Pistols, a Mask, and some other Things were found on him. His Mittimus was made, and he was sent to *Newgate*.

IN a Fortnight, Abundance of People swore to their being robb'd by him; and by means of some of his Girls, three of his Confederates were taken, and sent to bear him Company. In due Time, their Trials  
came

came on at the *Old Baily*, and they were found guilty, and sentenced to be hang'd.

SCAMPER had very little Hopes of gaining a Reprieve, yet did not prepare for Death in the Manner he ought. His favourite Doctrine, Repentance, he hardly thought of, at least he did not practise it. He drank to such Excess, that when the Hour came that he was to suffer an ignominious Death in the Sight of a numerous and gaping Populace, he seem'd quite insensible of his Fate.

HE was put into the Cart with his Companions, and they were driven to *Tyburn*. The fatal Rope was fasten'd round their Necks—the Ordinary told them they were going to another World—the Cart was driven away—and they were left suspended in the Air.

THUS perish'd BOB SCAMPER, a Man of no mean Abilities, but who prostituted them to infamous Purposes, and lived an immoral, vicious Life, though ever haranguing in the Society, on the Beauty of Holiness, and the Necessity of Repentance.—I wish this were not a common Case in the World.

ANOTHER Member of the Society, not less worthy than this, was TOM RAKEWELL. TOM, after having receiv'd an Education, that barely enabled him to read and write, was sent from the West of *England* to *London*, and there bound Apprentice to a Grocer. But TOM's Genius was not to be confin'd within so narrow a Channel. He soared to higher Things, and was ambitious enough to attempt getting on the Stage, where all his Desires were placed, and all his Hopes terminated. He offer'd himself to FLEETWOOD, the Manager, and was refused. Not daunted, however, at this Repulse, he ran away from his Master in the third Year of his Apprenticeship, went to *Norwich*, where a Company of Strollers were then performing, made a Tender of his Services, and was accepted. The pitiful Income of a strolling Player was too scanty for our Hero, and the Debts he had contracted were so numerous, and his Creditors so pressing, that *Norwich* became quickly too hot to hold him. He, therefore, set out from that Place for *Newcastle upon Tyne*, where there was another Company of Players: But, to enable himself to travel with greater Conveniency, he took with him

him as large a Bundle of the Manager's Cloaths as he could carry, and set out early in the Morning in a Post-Chaise.

HE quickly converted his Effects into ready Money, and reach'd *Newcastle* in two Days. But he was soon forced to decamp. The News of his being there, having reached his *quondam* Companions at *Norwich*, a Hue and Cry was raised, and two of the Actors were sent to *Newcastle* to apprehend him. RAKEWELL, by some Means, had Intelligence of their Arrival, and guessed their Errand; but declin'd the Honour of their Company, by leaving the Town so precipitately, that he had not even Time to pay the Landlord of the Inn he had set up at, a Score of thirty-seven shillings.

FROM hence he went to *Exeter*, at which Town he was born; and going to his Father, told him a long Story of his Master's ill Usage, and of the Impossibility of his living with him. His Father produced a Letter from his Master, informing him of his Son's running away without any Cause, but of his Readiness to pardon him if he would return. The Father and Son had now a great Contest, and the Master's



Letter had greater Weight with the old Man, than the Son's Affertions. He, however, promised RAKEWELL, that he would write to his Master in his Favour, and that 'till he could receive an Answer, he might stay with him. The Son acquiesced with the Proposal, seem'd pleased with it, and the old Man immediately wrote, extenuating his Son's Guilt, and apologizing for the Misconduct which the Weakness incident to Youth had drawn him into.

THREE Days after, TOM got up at One in the Morning, and opening a Bureau, found a Purse with no less than fifty-seven Guineas in it, being the poor old Man's whole Fortune, and which he had been hoarding up ever since his Son was first sent to *London*, out of the small Profits that accrued to him from a little Trade he had as a Peruke-maker. This was a Fortune to the over-joyed Youth, and putting it safe in his Pocket, he took his Stick, and walk'd 'till Seven in the Morning very briskly, when he had reach'd \* \* \* \*. Here he breakfasted, and the Stage-Coach coming by, he agreed with the Driver for his Passage to *London*.

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HE had no sooner arriv'd at the Metropolis, than the Scenes he had before been engag'd in, were renew'd, and the same Pranks play'd over again. While he was in his Apprenticeship, an indulgent Master had permitted him, after the Business of the Night was over, and Shop was shut, to spend his Evenings abroad. A Youth of such a Disposition as TOM had, it may naturally be imagin'd, did not spend them in very good Company, nor very innocently. The Houses he frequented were either Brothels, or Night-Houses, and the Company consisted of wild, and thoughtless young Apprentices like himself, or thorough-paced Rogues, who initiated the young ones into all the iniquitous Schemes and Arts they were Masters of. Tutors of Villainy like these, for whom *Tyburn* groans, abound in Houses of this Sort, and young Scholars attend there in great Numbers.

TOM keeping very bad Hours, was frequently lock'd out; but after he had the Experience of three Weeks Learning from a Veteran, he knew how to seduce his Master's Maid, and to prevail on her to let him in at any Hour. This Kindness went not unrewarded: To discharge his

Obligations to her, Tom robb'd his Master of Tea, Sugar, Spices and Snuff.

THIS was a pretty Life, which he now not only renew'd, but improv'd. He became a complete Buck and Blood, sallied out every Night in Quest of Adventures, beat the Watch, bullied Constables, demolished Lamps, kicked Waiters, bilked Bawdy-Houses, and went Home reeling to Bed.

ABOUT the Time he return'd to *London* from *Exeter*, he attended the *Essex-Head Society*. Their Debates charmed him, and he thought if he could be admitted a Member of so respectable and learned a Body, he should be quite happy. If Happiness consisted in being a Member, he was soon in Possession of it, for he was chosen *Nem. Con.*

RAKEWELL had a great Talent for Disputation. He had a ready Wit, great Volubility of Speech, and wanted not for a consummate Assurance. These Accomplishments must have endeared him greatly to the Society, and he was look'd on as a valuable Acquisition. It is true, there was no Solidity of Judgment, no Depth of Knowledge in him, any more than

than in his Friend SCAMPER ; but he had no less Art in exciting the Admiration of the Superficial, and the Ignorant, (a vast Body of Men !) and in making his Tinsel Ornaments pass for real Plate.

RAKEWELL's chief Fort was Religion. He distinguish'd himself greatly on Subjects of this Kind, and was thought to be as good an Orthodox Member as any in the Society. He combated the Deists with the invincible Armour of Revealed Religion, and played off the great Guns of Mysteries against them with no little Success. As the Doctrine of *occult Causes* is the greatest Friend of Metaphysicians and natural Philosophers, and serves as a Retreat for them where no Foes can enter ; so, when pressed by Argument, or urged by Authority, the Deists would demand Reasons for Assertions, and Proofs for *Ipse Dixits*, RAKEWELL would prudently retire from the Charge, and tell them that where Faith begins, Reason ends—that the Natural Man cannot comprehend Spiritual Subjects—that what is an Object of Faith, cannot be intelligible by Reason—and that though Revealed Religion may seem above Reason, yet it is not against it. These, and many other Answers of the like Kind, he gave to the Heterodox Gentry,



Gentry, and ever shew'd an inviolable Resolution to defend Religion in general, and the Establish'd Church in particular, against all the Attacks of their Foes: In Consequence of which, the Society look'd on him as an honourable Member, and a very learned and ingenious Man. After Debates on such Subjects, and Holy Arguments alledged in Favour of his Opinions, our Orator would leave the Society, and proceed to his usual Night Entertainments, of breaking the Lamps, and going Home to his Girls, where he rioted in Excess of Wickedness.

By some Means or other, RAKEWELL had got acquainted with an old Maiden Lady, worth no less than Thirteen Hundred Pounds. After paying his Addresses to her for some Time, he gain'd her Heart, and a Day was propos'd for Marriage. The antiquated Virgin, not doubting the Honour of her Lover, the Day before the intended Marriage, transferr'd over her whole Fortune to him. The Lover was now happy. He sold out the Thirteen Hundred Pounds Old South Sea Annuities, and Three per Cent. Bank Annuities, immediately. With the Money these produced, he set up a Chariot and Pair, took genteel Lodgings in *Pall-Mall*, and

and appear'd in every Respect as a Man of Fortune, quite regardless of the Attempts that might be made on him by the Sons of Law, and hoping to find out some other wealthy Dame, with whom he might meet with equal Success.

BUT though RAKEWELL was safe with Respect to the Revenge threaten'd him by the Lady he had tricked, and her Friends, yet his high Living and Extravagance soon dissipated his Substance, and he was at a Loss what to do. Paying ready Money for some Time, however, induced Tradesmen to give him Credit ; and having run in Tick to the Amount of Three Hundred Pounds, with various People ; and being dunned, and threatened several Times by the most Importunate of them, he was induced to shift his Quarters, to go away from his Lodgings without settling with his Landlord or his Footman (for he kept one to the last) and set out again for *Exeter*.

ON his Arrival there he told his Father a miserable Story, of his having been robbed of Five Hundred Guineas, of his having a Combat with the Highwaymen that had robbed him, and of his having employ'd several active Fellows to go in Search of them. His Father seeing him  
well-

well-dressed, and appear more like a Lord than *his* Son, testified his Joy at his Return. RAKEWELL then voluntarily mentioned his having robbed him of fifty-seven Guineas ; and, putting a Bill in his Hand, drawn on the most eminent Banker in *London*, for One Hundred Pounds, told him, he was not to look on that as a Recompence in full, but as an Earnest only of what he should receive. He then informed him of his having married a Lady worth Twenty Thousand Pounds but a Fortnight ago ; that he was then going to *Penzance* to settle Affairs with her Guardian, and would return to *London* in five Days, where his Lady impatiently expected him.

THE good old Man was so overjoy'd at hearing this Account of his Son's good Fortune, that he fell on his Neck, and kissed him, and with Tears in his Eyes told him, that he was glad to hear of his Success in Life ; but that he had no Occasion for the Hundred Pounds he had given him, he having, by his Care and Industry, since his leaving him last, saved up Twenty-seven Pounds ; and therefore he begged him to take back again his generous Gift of a Hundred Pounds, as, till his Affairs were settled, he might have Occasion for it.

BUT

BUT this RAKEWELL declined, and observed, that the Trifle he had given him, he could well spare ; that he insisted on his keeping it ; and that in a Fortnight he might have the Pleasure of trebling it to him. The old Man, filled with Joy at seeing such a Son, seemed perfectly happy ; went about to his Friends——told them of his Son's good Fortune——invited them to his House——bought the greatest Dainties he could possibly procure—and at Eight at Night the House was full of Guests, drinking Wine, Punch, and Beer, while roast Geese were at the Fire, Fowls in the Pot, and some other substantial Dishes provided, to entertain the Friends on the Prodigal's Return ; a Prodigal, that had been guilty of some Errors, that had been bred in Obscurity, and was now raised to great Grandeur.

THE Evening was spent in great Jolity, and all but RAKEWELL were perfectly intoxicated. After all the Company was gone, the old Man, whose Heart was now quite merry, went to a private Closet, took out a Bottle of excellent Citron Water, and desired his Son to take a Glass. The Son obeyed him, and the Father followed the Example. One Glass introduced



duced another, another followed, and, in short, the Duumvirate emptied the Bottle. The Son was now what they call half-seas over ; but the old Man was so intoxicated, he could neither sit or stand. With some Difficulty RAKEWELL got him to-bed, took the Key out of the Door, locked it, and then — went down Stairs.

HE began now to ransack the House, immediately seized the old Man's twenty-seven Pounds, and took every Thing away he could conveniently carry. He then went to the Inn he had put up at on his first coming to Town, ordered a Post Chaise, and told the Driver to go on as fast as he could.

A CHANGE of Chaises soon brought him to *London* ; and it happening to be on a *Monday Night*, he attended at the *Essex-Head Society*, and spoke to the Question, which was ;

*Whether, even in this World, a vicious and immoral Man, is not severely punished ? And if Virtue distressed, does not feel greater Happiness than exalted Vice ?*

PLATO.

RAKE-

RAKEWELL took the Affirmative Side of the Question, and proved, beyond all Manner of Contradiction, that Vice and Immorality met with its Punishment, by inflicting the Stings of Conscience at present, and the Dread of future Pain. Not that this Doctrine, he observed, tended in the least to set aside that of a future Retribution of Rewards and Punishments in another State; where, as we are taught by the Christian Religion, that Suffering Virtue will meet its ample Reward, and Triumphant Vice be suitably punished: But the Commission of good Actions, and the Consciousness of our having performed our Duty, gave a placid Serenity to our Minds, and a Composure to our Thoughts: A Felicity which the Huzzas of applauding Thousands could not give, nor the Hisses of detraacting and bitter Enemies take away. He took Notice also of the Distresses and Agonies of Mind a wicked Man always laboured under, through a Fear of being exposed, and his Wickedness revealed to the World; which would consequentially draw on him the severe Penalties of the Law, and the just Detestation of Mankind. He insisted on it, that the continual Apprehensions of Discovery a wicked Man must be under, and the

the Terrors of an abused Conscience, must prevent the Approaches of Happiness, and dash the Cup of Pleasure with a great Degree of nauseous and bitter Herbs. He then launched out into the Pleasures of Virtue and Religion; and made it appear, that their Votaries reaped greater Satisfaction, and tasted a more home-felt Pleasure than could possibly result from the highest Gratifications of sensual Appetite, or mere Animal Bliss. To prove these Assertions, he quoted a few Authors he had either read or heard of, as Enforcers of his Sentiments, and as Authors of his Doctrine: A great Name frequently proves more than a sound Argument; and People, with whom Learning and Reason have no Sort of Weight, are yet prevailed on to resign their Judgments, and to give up their Opinions to an Antient whom Time has sanctified, or to an illustrious Orthodox Writer, whose Notions and Sentiments have been honoured and embraced by the World.

THE Speech RAKEWELL delivered was well received, and the Society thought no one could excel him in Propriety of Thought, or Regularity of Conduct. After the Debates were over, RAKEWELL left the Society, and traversed the Streets, till

till he met with a Female he liked, and with whom he went to the most convenient Bagnio.

IN this Manner he continued for some Time, an unaccountable *Ænigma*, which none was able to solve: But being at length discovered to have robbed a Gentleman of Eminence in *Grosvenor-Square*, he was tried, convicted, and condemned, and executed at *Tyburn*, at the very Time that his Colleague and Companion, the facetious BOB SCAMPER suffered.— Thus was the Society deprived of two of their best Members, the most powerful and ornamental Pillars of their Fabric.

FOR some short Time after this the Society was observed to dwindle away, and its staunch Advocates and firm Friends began to fear that its Diffolution was nigh. Some imputed it to the Absence of two of their best Speakers, and the Despair the Public in general had of hearing any Thing debated on by able Orators, now the best were gone: Some imagined, that the melancholy Fate of those two Members deterred People from attending a Society on which they had once reflected such Honour, and which was now disgraced by  
their



their ignominious Death ; and some were earnestly wishing for its Annihilation.

It was not long, however, before the Fears of the one Party, and the Hopes of the other were turned into Certainty. The Society triumphed, their Friends rejoiced, and their Enemies were disappointed.

To give a long Detail of every Event that happened in this Society, to particularize all their Proceedings, and to characterize all their Members, would exceed the Bounds I have prescribed myself, and would be uncommonly tedious : I shall therefore only observe, that from the Time the Society was removed to the *Essex-Head*, it increased both in Numbers and in Reputation ; and so well was it known, that Gentlemen who lived in the Country, as well as Foreigners of all Nations, if in the least curious, learned, or ingenious, resorted to it to hear Debates that had so much attracted the Attention, and extorted the Admiration of the World.

End of the SECOND PART.

THE



THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
*Robinhood Society.*



PART III.

I N the Year 1747, the Society was removed to the *Robinhood in Butcher-Row*, at that Time kept by Mr. HALL. The Room here was vastly more convenient than the other : New Benches were made, in order that a greater Number of People might be admitted ; a Branch for eighteen Candles

## 118 *The* HISTORY *of*

Candles was suspended from the Ceiling ; a large Chair for the President, curiously gilt, was erected ; a Box to keep the Book of Questions, was provided ; a Hammer was purchased for the President ; and, in short, every Thing that was necessary to reflect Splendor on the Society, and to accommodate its Visitants in the best Manner, was obtain'd by the industrious Landlord, who had formed great Hopes of adding a Reputation to his House, and enriching himself, from the vast Concourse of People he expected would assemble there.

IN order to convey the best Idea I can of this famous Society to the Mind of the Reader, I apprehend it is necessary for me to give a fuller Account of the Management of it, than I have before done.

EVERY Person that attended it, was to pay Six-pence ; and that while these Disputants were enriching their Minds with the Treasures of Knowledge, they might also practise the God-like Virtue of Charity, they agreed, that out of every Six-pence the Landlord should be paid Four-pence for each Quart of Lemonade and Porter ; Three Half-pence should be  
set

set by, and appropriated to charitable Uses, to be agreed on by a select Committee appointed for that Purpose; and the remaining Half-penny should be paid to the Clerk, as a Recompence for the Trouble he was put to, in receiving each Person's Ticket, and taking Care that the Society in general, and the Disputants in particular, were duly serv'd with Liquor.

A PERPETUAL President was also appointed, whose Name was JEACOCKE, who was to act as Moderator, and who had, indeed, given great Satisfaction in that Character at the *Essex-Head*, for four Years. His Duty consisted in reading whatever Questions were proposed for Consideration, and offering them separately to the Choice of the Members: Those who chose that a Question, should be admitted, and enter'd in the Book, were to signify it by holding up their Hands; and those who did not think it a proper Question, were to signify their Opinion in the same Manner; and the Majority carried it. After this Part of his Duty, he was to read the Question for the Night's Debate, and then ask the several Members whether they chose to speak to it, beginning



ning with the Person who sat next to his left Hand, and proceeding all round the Room 'till he came to the Person who sat next his right Hand. When any Person got up to speak, he was also to take Minutes of what he conceiv'd to be of particular Importance, and by thus collecting the different Sentiments of different People, he was enabled, when it came to his Turn to speak, to enforce the Arguments that strengthen'd his own Opinion, and invalidate those that were against it. If no Person thought proper to own a Question, or to confess himself the Proposer of it, then the President was the adopted Father, and he open'd the Question, by explaining the Terms of it, and concluded the Debates on it, by a Speech of his own; but if the Author of the Question own'd it, then the Person next to his left Hand spoke to it, and it was to go round in due Order, and the Proposer concluded it. The President was likewise to keep Order and Decorum in the Society; to prevent any personal Altercations, or mean Invectives; to make them stick to the Point; to bring them back when they went astray; to see likewise with the Clerk, that the Society was well supplied with Liquor; and, in short, to do every Thing that was for the

the Interest of the Society, and the Good of the Members present.

By this Account of the Duty of the President, it will appear that his Trouble every Night was not little. It is always difficult to keep a promiscuous Company in good Order ; and a Society, like the ROBINHOOD, where every one is admitted for his Six-pence, must be liable to many Irregularities. But though the President's Trouble was so great, yet his Attachment to, and Veneration for, the Society was such, that, unlike the interested Conduct of most other Presidents, he acted *Gratis*, contenting himself only with the Honour of the Office.

ONCE a Year a Paper was publish'd by the Society, containing a Justification of it from the Sneers of Witlings, and the Sarcasms of some satirical Authors, and setting forth its Nature and Tendency ; and underneath it, was an Account of the Number of People that had attended it all the Year, distinguishing the particular Number that met each *Monday* Night. This was thought more likely to vindicate their Conduct, and wipe off the Aspersions that had been thrown on them, than

an elaborate Defence; since by seeing what a vast Number of People attended each Night, amounting in a Year's Time to upwards of Five Thousand, on a moderate Computation, the Public might perceive that no less than Five Thousand three Half-pennies were distributed in Charity, amounting to 31 *l.* 5*s.*—And even supposing that the Society could not vie in Splendor with the ROYAL SOCIETY, or in Dignity with the ANTIQUARIAN, or in Numbers with the SOCIETY FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF ARTS, MANUFACTURES AND COMMERCE, and even granting their Antagonists Assertions to be true, that it was a Receptacle for the Illiterate and the Impious, where horrid and blasphemous Notions were defended and propagated, and where Religion and Virtue were trodden under Foot; yet still, it may be urged from great Authority, that Charity *covers* a Multitude of Sins.

THE Society now advancing in its Reputation, and some of the most distinguished Wits and Scholars frequenting it, it greatly excited the public Attention. There was scarce a public Paper, but in the Course of its Animadversions, the ROBINHOOD SOCIETY was taken Notice  
of.



of. DoCTOR HENLEY vindicated it from his Rostrum, and comparing it to some of the famed Assemblies of Yore, where a CICERO, or a DEMOSTHENES harangued, he affirm'd it to be of the most eminent Service to Mankind, by mending their Morals, enlarging their Knowledge, and refining their Taste; that it was infinitely preferable, consider'd as a School of Oratory, to the Bar, or the Senate; and that it excell'd the Pulpit, both with Respect to the Advancement of TRUE RELIGION, and the spreading of Human Knowledge. Nay, he affirm'd it to be the Sun of the intellectual and moral World, that with its radiant Beams enlighten'd, cheer'd, and vivified the Spiritual System, as the Firmamental Sun doth the Natural.—In short, he undertook to vindicate it from his Rostrum in *Lincoln's-Inn Fields*, from all the Calumnies and Aspersions, that ever had been, or could be rais'd against it, and insisted on its being the most perfect human Institution that was ever form'd, except——his own Oratory.

ON the other Hand, the Pulpits every where display'd its evil Tendency, and resounded with its Infamy. The Clergy were so much against it, that, Surgeon-  
G 2 like,

He had his "Oratory" in a large room in  
Butcher Row Newport Market Long Acre  
In Feb 1769 he left & quitted his  
"Gilt tub" by the change land  
by the Duke of Newcastle and other  
Gentlemen of the University of Oxford near  
Oxford market



like, they dissected and cut it up without Mercy. They averr'd, that the House itself could not stand long; that it was a second Pandemonium, or Assembly of evil Spirits; that though they at present triumphed, yet they would shortly be defeated; and that every one of the Members that composed it, would infallibly be d—d. Nay, one Reverend Gentleman in particular,\* prophesied, some Years after the Period I am now describing, that as it was absolutely certain, that the Merchants that were settling their Books at the Earthquake in *Lisbon*, in the Year 1749, were swallow'd up, and immediately consign'd to the Care of the D——l; so the ROBINHOOD would shortly meet the like Fate, or be torn from its Foundations, whirled through the Air by the Prince of it, be carried, like OUR LADY OF *Loretto*, Thousands of Leagues, and at Length, with its whole Cargo, thrown down to H—ll.

THE Society, however, in Spight of these Denunciations, maintain'd its Ground,

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\* That very popular Gentleman, the candid, the ingenious, and ingenuous Mr. R—M—NE.

and increased in Fame. The Names of the Members had been written in their Book of Questions, and new ones were continually added. The Regulations they were under, were likewise copied out fair; and these, with the List of the Questions that succeeded them, were open to every one's Perusal.

THE President discharg'd his Trust with Fidelity and Honour, and the Society in general thought themselves much oblig'd to him for the Care he had taken of their Interest, and the good Order and Regularity he preserv'd.

To make this History compleat, and to perform my Promise made in the Title-Page, of giving Memoirs of the most remarkable Members, I shall, in this third Part, as is most fit, begin with the President,

Mr. CALEB JEACOCKE,

Or, As he is more frequently called,

The BAKER.

**M**Y Intention in giving a few Memoirs of this Gentleman, is not to surprize the Reader, by a Relation of uncommon or interesting Events, but merely to rescue a Character, greatly traduced, and viely misrepresented, by all the Authors, as far as I have seen, who have employ'd their Pens on this Subject.

IN the Lives of the Generality of Men, there is nothing remarkable enough to satisfy the Curiosity of Readers, unless the Imagination of the Author is exerted, to feign Events that never happen'd, and employ his Hero in Scenes he was never engaged in. This is the Case with Mr. JEACOCKE. His Life has not been chequer'd with those variegated Hues that make so pleasing an Appearance in the Biographer's Page, nor did he ever run  
through

through such a Variety of Adventures, as in the Recital excite alternately the different Passions of the Mind.

HE was born in *London*, and having receiv'd such an Education as enabled him only to read, write, and cast Accompts, he was put Apprentice to a Baker. He behaved extremely well in his Apprenticeship, and was pointed out as an Example for others in the same Station of Life. As soon as his Apprenticeship was expir'd, by the generous Legacy of a good old Aunt, he was enabled to set up for himself, and pitch'd upon *St. Giles's* for that Purpose. He was remarkably diligent in his Business, punctual in his Engagements, and, in every Respect, approv'd himself a truly honest Man; so that he was valued and esteemed by every one to whom he was known.

HAVING a perfect Knowledge of Accompts, and being blessed with such a clear Judgment, as could almost intuitively distinguish and separate Truth from Falshood, he was requested by many Merchants and Tradesmen, whose Accompts were long, embarrassed, and intricate, to adjust and settle them: And this he per-



form'd with an Expedition and Correctness, that few could equal, and none excel; even after some of the most eminent Accomptants in *London* had despaired settling them, and pronounced them impossible to be made out clear and evident.

PROVIDENCE smiled on his Undertakings, and he got Money apace. His being appointed President of the ROBINHOOD SOCIETY, made him universally known, and THE BAKER has been talk'd of, I believe, in every City and Town in *England*. JEACOCKE was not averse to Popularity, nor in Love with it for its intrinsic Worth, but for the Benefit that accompanied it, in making him known to some of the greatest Men in the Kingdom, and some of the most respectable and wealthy Merchants, whose Accompts he settled, and for which he was paid very large Sums.

IN this Situation he continued, increasing his Wealth and Fame, 'till the latter End of the Year 1761, when he thought proper to resign his Office of President of the ROBINHOOD SOCIETY, having continued in that honourable Station nineteen Years: And in a few Months afterwards,  
he

he was appointed one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of *Middlesex*, in which Capacity he now acts with an Integrity and Honour, with a Clearness of Judgment, and a Fervour of Humanity, excell'd by none. He is consider'd by the Rational and Judicious, as a tacit Satire on the Practice of some trading Justices, who sell their *Judgment* and *Mercy*, as a *Grocer* sells his Raisins and Sugar, at so much *per* Pound.

THOUGH JEACOCKE has never receiv'd, what we term, a liberal Education, yet his Mind is stored with a greater Stock of real Knowledge, than nineteen Parts out of twenty of those who have breathed a College Air for many Years. But though his Judgment is clear, and his Knowledge extensive, yet his unbounded Humanity, his amiable Chearfulness, his discreet Complaisance, his incorruptible Integrity, are still superior. His Philanthropy is so great, that Misery and Distress never applied to him in vain. His Advice and Purse were ever open to the Indigent; but his Knowledge of the World teaching him to distinguish between real and pretended Distress, between honest Poverty and artful Villainy, whenever he found

Examples of the latter, he was as rigorous in inflicting Punishments, as in the former he was ready to afford Relief. In his Deportment he is grave, but not austere; serious, but not melancholy; chearful, but not merry; reserved, but not hypocritical. He possesses Judgment without Ostentation; Humility without Meanness; and Worth without Pride. Ever open to Conviction, in his Office of President, he never obtruded his Opinions on his Auditors for certain Truths, but retracted them, and own'd his Mistakes, if pointed out. *Slave* to no Sect, but a Friend and Member of the Church of *England*, he vindicated her from the rude Assaults of Deists and Unbelievers, not by positive Dogmas, and mere *Ipse Dixits*, but by candid Reasoning, and fair Argument. When unacquainted with the Subject of Debate, he sought not by retailing the Sentiments of others, to pass as an intelligent Man, or to take up their Time by delivering a String of Words without Meaning, but left the Question to be debated by those whose Inclination or Situation in Life put it in their Power to speak to it properly. By these Means, and having a retentive Memory, and a fine natural Genius, and being remarkably  
attentive



attentive to whatever was said on every Subject, there are few he has not now a general Knowledge of, and a great many he is particularly conversant in. His Reasoning is close, but not void of Perspicuity; and his Elocution free and natural, but not rapid and verbose. He ever strives rather to convince the Mind, than to excite the Passions, and to deliver wholesome Truths and useful Precepts, than to charm the Imagination with Paradoxes, and lead the Soul to Fairy Ground, by the Pomp of Words, and the Richness of Imagery; so that his Eloquence rather resembles a smooth and gentle Current that glides softly along, than the foaming and majestic *Tyber*, or the rapid *Tagus*, that rolls its golden Waves in Disdain of Limits, overbearing and sweeping every Thing before it.

JEACOCKE being such a Person as I have described, it is no Wonder that he should be revered by the Society. He had a prodigious Influence over them, and kept them in more Awe, than a Pedagogue doth his Scholars, or even than the Speaker of a great Assembly can frequently keep the Members, as Mr. A———  
O———W



O—s—w himself once owned to Mr.  
JEACOCKE.

ANOTHER Member of the Society at its first Opening at the ROBINHOOD, was the NOTORIOUS

Mr. Orator HENLEY.

SOME Account of this Phenomenon may not be unacceptable to the Public. But as a better than I can give of him, has been already given in one of the Notes to Mr. POPE's *Dunciad*, I shall extract that Paragraph, and then hazard a few Remarks of my own on this singular Genius.

“ J. HENLEY the Orator ; he preach'd  
“ on the *Sundays* upon Theological Mat-  
“ ters, and on the *Wednesdays* upon all  
“ other Sciences. Each Auditor paid  
“ One Shilling. He declaimed some Years  
“ against the greatest Persons, and occa-  
“ sionally did our Author that Honour.  
“ WELSTED, in Oratory Transactions,  
“ No. I. publish'd by HENLEY himself,  
“ gives the following Account of him :  
“ He

*the Robinhood Society.* 133

“ He was born at *Melton Mowbray* in  
“ *Leicestershire*. From his own Parish  
“ School he went to *St. John's College* in  
“ *Cambridge*. He began there to be  
“ uneasy; for it shock'd him to find he  
“ was *commanded to believe* against his  
“ own Judgment in Points of Religion,  
“ Philosophy, &c. for his Genius leading  
“ him freely to *dispute all Propositions*,  
“ and *call all Points to Account*, he was  
“ impatient under those Fetters of the  
“ free-born Mind. Being admitted to  
“ Priest's Orders, he found the Examina-  
“ tion very short and superficial; and  
“ that it was not *necessary to conform to*  
“ *the Christian Religion*, in order either  
“ to *Deaconship* or *Priesthood*. He came  
“ to Town, and after having for some  
“ Years been a Writer for Booksellers,  
“ he had an Ambition to be so for Mini-  
“ sters of State. The only Reason he  
“ did not rise in the Church, we are  
“ told, was the Envy of others, and a  
“ Disrelish entertain'd of him, because *he*  
“ *was not qualified to be a complete Spaniel*.  
“ However, he offer'd the service of his  
“ Pen to two great Men, of Opinions  
“ and Interests directly opposite; by both  
“ of whom being rejected, he set up a  
“ new Project, and stiled himself the  
“ *Restorer*

“ *Restorer of antient Eloquence.* He  
 “ thought it as lawful to take a Licence  
 “ from the King and Parliament at one  
 “ Place, as another; at *Hicks’s Hall*, as  
 “ at *Doctors Commons*; to set up his  
 “ Oratory in *Newport Market, Butcher*  
 “ *Row.* There (says his Friend) he had  
 “ the *Assurance* to form a Plan, which  
 “ no Mortal ever thought of; he had  
 “ Success against all Opposition; chal-  
 “ leng’d his Adversaries to fair Disputa-  
 “ tions, and *none would dispute* with him:  
 “ Writ, read, and studied twelve Hours  
 “ a Day; compos’d three Dissertations a  
 “ Week on all Subjects; undertook to  
 “ teach in *one Year*, what Schools and  
 “ Universities teach in *five*; was not  
 “ terrified by Menaces, Insults, or Satires,  
 “ but still proceeded, matured his bold  
 “ Scheme, and put the *Church*, and *all*  
 “ *that in Danger.*”

WESLIED, Narrative in Orat.  
 Transact. No: I.

“ AFTER having stood some Prosecu-  
 “ tions, he turn’d his Rhetoric to Buf-  
 “ soonry upon all public and private oc-  
 “ currences. All this pass’d in the same  
 “ Room; where sometimes he broke  
 “ Jest, and sometimes that Bread which  
 “ he

“ he call'd the *Primitive Eucharist*.——  
“ This wonderful Person struck Medals,  
“ which he dispers'd as Tickets to his  
“ Subscribers: The Device, a Star rising  
“ to the Meridian, with this Motto,  
“ AD SUMMA; and below, INVE-  
“ NIAM VIAM AUT FACIAM. This  
“ Man had a Hundred Pounds a Year  
“ given him for the secret Service of a  
“ Weekly Paper of unintelligible Non-  
“ sense, call'd the Hyp-Doctor.”

POPE's Works, Vol. V.

THE Doctor was indeed a Composition of Inconsistency and Singularity. He wanted not Sense or Learning, but perverted both to the most unworthy Purposes. He understood the Principles of Religion very well; but his chief Delight was in making it appear ridiculous, by the ludicrous Light in which he view'd it himself, and represented it to others. As to any fix'd Principles, with Respect to political Notions, he had none, but employ'd all his Talents to laugh at, and make all Government appear a mere Joke. But though the Doctor understood Religion tolerably well, and could, when he thought proper, compare the different Sects, and exhibit their various Excellencies in a striking and picturesque



tureſque Manner, yet he was more diſpoſed to cull out their ſeveral Defects and Imperfections, ſo as to make all of them appear mere human Inventions, and the Creatures which intereſted Priests and artful Knaves had dressed up, to impoſe on, and frighten the Vulgar. His chief Talent lay in Buffoonery, and making the moſt amiable Things appear mere Monſters, and hideous Caricatures. Thus Religion was vilified, her Miniſters traduced, Morality laugh'd at, Merit treated as a mere Non-Entity, and the greateſt Characters in the Kingdom taken to Pieces and anatomised with all the Licentiousneſs imaginable, every *Sunday*, when the Ollio of Scandal and Nonſenſe was ſerv'd up to the Public. He was of an over-bearing Temper, insolent to his Inferiors, and unmannerly to his Superiors. His Pride, which was exceſſive, taught him to deſpiſe every one with whom he converſed; and his Self-Love, which was inordinate, and reign'd over him with a deſpotic Sway, led him to ſuppoſe, that every one was inferior to himſelf in Point of Judgment. Hence that ridiculous Vanity which was viſible in his every Action, and prompted him to enforce his own Arguments with the moſt indecent Noiſe and violent Geſticulations,

to

to disregard the Sentiments of others, and to be continually interrupting them in the Course of their Reasoning. As a Companion, therefore, he was odious; as a Clergyman, indecent; as an Orator reprehensible; as a Christian, culpable; and as Man, contemptible.

THE Doctor being such a Person as I have describ'd him, it may be wonder'd that his Oratory should be so prodigiously frequented: But, I apprehend, it is no Wonder at all. Novelties will always attract; Scandal has Charms for many Appetites; and an unrestrain'd Licentiousness of railing against Religion and Government, will always draw vast Numbers of Infidels and Libertines to hear their Patron and Advocate sounding the Trumpet of Sedition. Not but that others of a different Cast attended the Oratory: Some came to laugh *with* the Orator, and some to laugh *at* him: Some, to unbend their Minds, and forget the rigid Rules of Morality they had just before heard in our Places of public Worship; and some to confirm themselves in Infidelity and Impiety, and enable themselves to become Disputants.

THE Orator, with various Success, still kept up his ORATORY KING GEORGE's, or CHARLES's CHAPEL, as he differently term'd it, 'till the Year 1759, when he died. At its first Establishment it was amazingly crowded, and Money flowed in upon him apace; and between whiles, it languished and drooped: But for some Years before its Author's Death, it dwindled away so much, and fell into such an hectic State, that the few Friends of it fear'd its Decease was very near. The Doctor, indeed, kept it up to the last, determin'd it should live as long as he did, and actually exhibited many Evenings to empty Benches. Finding no one at length would attend, headmitted the Acquaintances of his Door-Keeper, Runner, Mouth-Piece, and some others of his Followers, *gratis*. On the 13th of *October*, however, the Doctor died, and the Oratory ceased; no one having Iniquity or Impudence sufficient to continue it on; since which it is turn'd into a Tradesman's Warehouse.

I SHALL now give a brief Account of the most considerable of the Oratorical Members from its first Establishment at the ROBINHOOD, to the present Time.

Mr.

*Genl Magazine obituary*

*died 14 Oct 1756*

Mr. B \* R R \* \* \* T \* N.

**F**ORMERLY a Governor of one of our Plantations. He was a Man of tolerable good Parts, had been engaged in various Scenes of Life, was a close Reasoner, but very deficient in oratorical Abilities ; his Delivery being slow, and accompanied with a Thickness of Voice, and an ungraceful Demeanor, which greatly prejudiced the Audience against him. He was a rank Deist, and, on all Occasions, ridiculed the Christian System, with an Asperity and Acrimony that denoted his extreme Aversion to it ; but, it is said, that on his Death-bed he owned the beauty and Sanctity of that Religion, which alone can ensure an happy Immortality to those who square their Lives agreeable to its holy Precepts, and, in pathetic Terms, bewailed his own Infelicity, in being deprived of that Comfort and that Light which can enable the Righteous to triumph over the Grave, and make Death lose its Sting.

Mr.



Mr. B \* D D \* \* P H.

A VERY *Proteus* in Principle and Conduct. This Day of one Opinion; the next of a different. He changed his Sentiments much oftner than he did his Cloaths; an extravagant Life, and an Itch for Disputing, having reduced him from an honourable Situation in Life, to a very mean one, with one Suit of Cloaths only to his Back. He is descended from noble Ancestors; has a Baronet for his elder Brother, but is now in the Service of the *East-India* Company, in the Character of a private Soldier. He is endued with excellent Faculties, distinguishes Things with a Clearness and Precision few can excel him; has a ready Wit, sound Judgment, and an easy Delivery; but he has a squeaking disagreeable Tone, and, on Account of his changing Sides so often, whatever he says has little or no Effect on his Auditors. He has distinguished himself in the Republic of Letters by many ingenious Productions; but what made him more particularly remarkable as an Author, was, the uncommon Pains he took in the Affair of CANNING and SQUIRES, searching

searching and diving into that mysterious Transaction, and giving the Result of his Enquiries, and his own Conjectures, in several Pamphlets and Essays he wrote on the Subject. He was promised to be amply rewarded for his Trouble, by the Magistrate who employ'd him in the Affair, but who, it is said, never gave him one Penny on that Account.

Mr. G \* N T \* \* M \* N.

A VERY ingenious Gentleman, the Son of a Colonel of the *Irish* Establishment, Author of SEJANUS, a Tragedy, and many other well-wrote Pieces. He is now a Lieutenant on Half-pay, and lives at *Worcester*. As an Orator he was excellent ; having an Energy of Expression, a Facility of Utterance, and a Reach of Thought few can equal. Fortune, who, in the Distribution of her Favours, proves herself a blind and ignorant Judge of Merit, has been peculiarly severe to this Gentleman. He was promised, by a late deceased worthy Lord, to be provided for ; but nothing has been done for him, and he now lives upon a scanty Pittance ; a deplorable Instance that Men of the  
greatest

greatest Merit, Learning, and Genius, may sit sighing in Rags and Poverty, while pliant Knaves, Fools, and Coxcombs, bask in the Sunshine of a Court, and almost bend beneath the Load of Fortune's Favours. He has not unfrequently wrote in Conjunction with

Mr. D \* R R \* \* K.

A MAN no more fit to stand in Competition with G\*NT\*\*M\*N, than a Pigmy with *Hercules*. This Gentleman, however, as an Author, and a facetious Companion, is not without some Merit. His Merit, however, is tinged with no small Degree of Self-Conceit, and his Conversation with unpardonable Egotisms. He was born in *Dublin*, and, by his Aunt, put Apprentice to a Linnen-draper; but, instead of minding his Business, he was ever reading Plays, and composing Madrigals. In Consequence of this Propensity, he ran away from his Master, came to *London*, and commenced Author; in which honourable Vocation he continued, with various Success, till about two Years ago, when he was chosen Master of the Ceremonies at *Bath*; but was lately discharged

*the* Robinhood Society. 143

charged from that Office, and Monsieur CAULETT chosen in his Room.

Mr. F O O T E.

**T**HIS very ingenious Gentleman is so well known to the Public, that any Account of him would be needless. The same Thing may also be observed of

Mr. M A C K L I N,

**W**HO is now exhibiting his Abilities, both as an Author and an Actor, at the Theatre in *Smock-Alley, Dublin.*

Mr. G R \* \* \* S.

**A** PAINTER by Trade, and a Deist in Principle. He was a strenuous Advocate for the Society ; but the very Household Abilities he possessed, put it out of his Power to be eminently serviceable to it. His Character is drawn with no unskilful Hand by the Author of *THE ROBINHOOD SOCIETY, a Satire.* To which I refer, and shall therefore say no more of him here.

JOHN



## JOHN H\*\*KE, Esq;

A GENTLEMAN of Genius and Judgment, a firm Friend, and an agreeable Companion. He possesses a Solidity of Thought, and a Vivacity of Imagination, that seldom unite in the same Person. He is descended from a respectable Family, had high Expectations from a wealthy Uncle, but was greatly disappointed, and barbarously treated, by his leaving his Fortune from his Nephew, to People he was not allied to. Mr. H\*\*KE, however, by the Exertion of his Talents, has gained a very pretty Fortune, and was lately chosen Member for *M\*\*\*\*n* in *Essex*. In this Capacity there is no Doubt but he will behave properly ; for he has all the Faculties and Accomplishments requisite to form the complete Senator ; and, in the Editor's Opinion, possesses an Integrity of Soul, not any ways inferior to the Judgment of his Head. He is likewise a Member of the Society for the ENCOURAGEMENT of ARTS ; but has not for some Years belonged to the ROBINHOOD.

Mr.

Mr. M \* R \* Y.

**A** TAYLOR by Trade, formerly a Quaker, now a Deist; and a very *merry* Fellow he is. He has no great Abilities, nor very contemptible ones. If an Attempt to entertain is meritorious, this *merry* Fellow possesses a great Share of Merit; for all his Speeches are calculated for that End.

Mr. WILLIAM C \* \* TY.

**F**ORMERLY a Cabinet-maker in the *Strand*. There was nothing very remarkable in this Person, but that his Conceptions of Things were so dull, and the Succession of his Ideas so rapid, that his Tongue could not give Utterance to them. He was so sensible of his Deficiency in this Respect, that in the Course of his *Speechifying*, he was ready to quarrel with himself, for not being able to give a Vent to the Thoughts with which he was almost ready to burst. Whether he was more happy in expressing his Sentiments in Writing, than in extemporaneous Discourses,

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I know

I know not, never having seen any of his Compositions, though I am told he wrote a good deal.

## GEORGE B \* \* D G \* S.

**A** *Noted Bug-Doctor near Hatton-Garden,* Author of several unintelligible Pamphlets, full of pious Rants, enthusiastic Jargon, and unmeaning Stuff. He is a Quaker, and has often held forth as a Preacher, in which Character he must certainly appear to Advantage, as he has a Facility of Utterance, and can harangue for half an Hour together in such a Style and Manner it shall be impossible for any Mortal to fathom his Meaning. Fine Accomplishments these for a Quaking Preacher !

## Mr. S \* \* N D \* \* S \* N.

**A** *SURGEON of some Eminence in Great Queen Street, near Lincoln's Inn Fields.* He is of the establish'd Church with Respect to his Religion, and a strenuous Advocate for it. As a Scholar, he is by no Means contemptible ; as a Snr-

Surgeon, skilful; as an Orator, middling; and as an Author, indifferent. He is a Man of great Integrity, and is respected by all who have the Pleasure of his Acquaintance. He is of an open, chearful Temper, and extremely good-natur'd. He belongs to a Society, not unlike that of the ROBINHOOD, held at the *Devil Tavern*, near *Temple-Bar*. He is a great Admirer of the Moderns, and thinks they excel the Antients, in the Goodness both of their Lives and Writings. How far this Opinion of his is just, it is not our Business to enquire into here, though such an Enquiry would be both pleasant and profitable.

Mr. R \* B \* \* S \* N.

A GENIUS truly surprizing: A perfect Phenomenon. He is characterised in the Satire on the ROBINHOOD SOCIETY, under the Name of BIBO; and, indeed, that Name suits him very well. It is a common Saying, that

*Poets are born, but Orators are taught.*



THE Meaning of this must be, that without a natural Genius, no Man can excel in Verse; but without any Genius, a Man may be capable of shining as a Speaker: This, however, is by no Means applicable to BIBO, for he was neither *born*, nor *made* an Orator; and it is really astonishing, that without having any Thing to say, he yet speaks his five Minutes at the ROBINHOOD without Intermission, after which he sits down, and with a ghastly Grin smiling his own Applause, proceeds to his darling Business of quaffing Porter.

Mr. B \* \* C \* \* Y.

THIS Gentleman is Master of an Academy at *Tottenham High Cross*, and has lately taken Holy Orders. He is a Native of *North Britain*, and is a Man of Learning and Integrity. Were it not for a strong *Scotch* Accent, he would be a very good Orator, since his Sentiments are always orthodox and just, his Diction pure and elegant, his Elocution free and graceful, and his Action spirited and easy. I know of no Person to whom I would entrust

entrust the Education of a Son, sooner than to him ; for while he takes Care to improve their Heads, he neglects not to mend their Hearts. He was one of the Candidates for the Lectureship of *White-chaple* Church not long since ; and if Piety and Virtue, Learning and Good-Sense, had been preferr'd, perhaps Mr. B\*\*\*C\*\*\*Y had been chosen Lecturer : But it is no uncommon Thing to see Merit disregarded, and Ignorance exalted.—Interest now-a-days, is the Empress of the World.

Mr. C \* \* W F \* \* D.

**T**HIS Gentleman is also of the same Country, and of the same Profession as the last mention'd, but not possessed of equal Abilities. He is, however, a Man of good common Sense, but has no great Depth of Learning. What his Merit may be as a School-master, I pretend not to say ; but as an Orator, he is by no Means contemptible. He is rather too diffuse in his Reasoning, and his Expressions are frequently vague and undeterminate ; but there is a Vein of Piety, and a Zeal for the Interests of Religion, discoverable in all his Discourses.—In

short, he is a Man of some Abilities, but they are not so great as he imagines them to be.

Mr. WILLIAM W \* \* Y.

**T**HIS Gentleman is a facetious Companion, and possesses a considerable Share of Learning and good Sense. He was bred to the Profession of the Law, but that dry Study not agreeing with his gay and volatile Disposition, he frequently indulg'd himself in a Correspondence with the Muses, and improv'd it to such Advantage, as shortly to get them with Child, as COLLEY CIBBER humorously expresses it. What sort of Offspring he has, appears by his SHRUBS OF PARNASSUS, his BLOSSOMS OF HELICON, and the POETICAL CALENDAR in twelve Volumes, in which last Work he was assisted by Mr. FAWKES. He is now Steward to a noble Lord, and behaves in that Character with incorruptible Integrity, and great Judgment. As an Orator, we pretend not to give our Opinion of him, as he never spoke at the Society above twice or thrice.

Mr.

Mr. RICHARD L\*\*\*S,

AUTHOR of the ROBINHOOD SOCIETY a *Satire*, *The Adventures* of PATRICK O'DONNELL, *the Adventures* of CHARLES CARELESS, and a Multitude of other Works. This Gentleman, as well as his Friend Mr. W\*\*\*Y, was bred to the Law, but, like him, instead of studying COKE UPON LYTTLETON, or VINER's *Abridgment*, was ever reading SHAKESPEAR and POPE, and composing Madrigals. As an Author, we decline giving our Opinion: His Works must speak for him. As an Orator, he must be ranked in the third Class, having a weak Voice, a harsh and untuneable Accent, and an ungraceful Action. He has not spoke in the Society for many Years; and, indeed, if he had never spoken there at all, it would have been no Matter; for as during the Time he belong'd to the Society, he was no Ornament to it, so now he has withdrawn himself from it, he is not miss'd.



## Mr. PETER A \* N \* T.

**T**HIS Gentleman has made himself very *notorious*. He has been pilloried; fined, and imprisoned, several Times, for his ardent Zeal in inculcating the *true Religion*, and his laudable Endeavours to prove MOSES a Bl—h—d, and the Christian Religion a mere Ch—t, intended to affront the common Sense of Mankind. Strange! that so zealous a Reformer should be punish'd, instead of being rewarded! and that Mankind are still blinded by Prejudice, which this Gentleman would remove, and still hamper'd by the Shackles of Religion, which he would knock off! He was formerly a School-master, after that Clerk to a Merchant; then, he had some Employment in a public Office, and for these twelve Months last past, he has enjoy'd a Place in *Bridewell*. What he intends to do now, I know not. He was for some Years a main Pillar of the ROBINHOOD SOCIETY, and used to read his Productions to the Members, instead of speaking extempore. As an Orator, he is to the last Degree contemptible, having a tame and  
lifeless

lifeless Pronunciation, and a mean and insipid Action. His Abilities are, however, far from indifferent, but it is a Pity that Age and Experience should not have taught him Discretion enough—to refrain from insulting the Religion of his Country.

Mr. WILLIAM R\*D\*R.

**T**HIS Gentleman enter'd into Holy Orders about five Years ago, since which he has not frequented the ROBINHOOD SOCIETY. Before that, he used to be a constant Member, and spoke to every Question that was debated, with an Extent of Knowledge, and a Clearness of Precision, that evinced, there were few Subjects he was unacquainted with. But if his Judgment is very great, his Integrity is still greater. He is a faithful Husband, an affectionate Father, a good Christian, a firm Friend, a chearful Companion. His Exposition of the BIBLE, is a standing Proof of his Piety and Learning ; his DICTIONARY, a noble Monument of critical Accuracy ; and his HISTORY of *England*, an undeniable Evidence of his Candor and Judgment. As a Preacher, he is deservedly admir'd. His Compositions,

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tions, abstracted from the Charms of his Delivery, will bear the strictest Scrutiny; but when heighten'd and enforc'd by the Beauty of Pronunciation, and Energy of Action, it is no Wonder they should extort the Admiration, and secure the Esteem of the enraptured Congregation. As a Scholar, he is greatly celebrated, being thoroughly conversant with both the learned and modern Languages, and which all his Works in general, but his BIBLE and DICTIONARY in particular, irrefragably prove. The last contains a Fund of Knowledge beyond any other I know of; and I dare pronounce it to be the best and most useful of any we have in this Dictionary-making Age.

Mr. R \* B L \* S.

**A** JEW, a Deist, a Stock-broker, and an Author, united in one Person. What an *Hachis*! What a strange Mixture!—He wrote a Pamphlet some Time since, intituled, SUPERSTITION WORSE THAN ATHEISM, which he had the Discretion to vend privately, for Fear of the Censure of the Civil Magistrate. His Notions of Religion exactly correspond with

with those of Mr. PETER A\*N\*T, and his Oratory is not unlike his; he has a thick, mumbling, lisping Voice, a Hesitation of Speech, confused Ideas, and an ungraceful Delivery. It is not a little to the Honour of the Christian Religion, that it has for its Enemies such contemptible Beings.

Mr. S \* \* \* \* S.

A VERY ingenious Gentleman, a good Writer, and a fine Speaker. He was some Time Amanuensis to Mr. JOHNSON, and wrote many fugitive Pieces on temporary Subjects, that are now forgotten, as well as some that are now justly esteem'd.

Mr. RICHARD AC\*\*\*D.

HE kept a Lottery-Office not many Years ago, after which he was Deputy Commissary at *Belleisle*. He is now a Gentleman at large, and keeps Company with Bucks and Choice Spirits. He is of a dry, saturnine, sarcastic Disposition, but wants not Sense, though possessed of little.



little scholastic Knowledge, or oratorical Abilities. He takes great Delight in making personal Infirmities Objects of Ridicule, and of viewing the most serious Subjects with an Eye of Levity. However esteem'd these Qualifications and Disposition may be by his Companions, they are not regarded by Disputants; and therefore, we apprehend, Mr. AC\*\*\*D is much better formed to shine in a modern nocturnal Meeting of Bloods, than in a Society of Philosophers.

Mr. THOMAS M\*\*T\*M\*R.

**T**HIS Gentleman was formerly a Linen-Draper, but meeting with Misfortunes, to which every Man in Trade is liable, was oblig'd to compound with his Creditors; after which he turned Stockbroker, being induced thereto, as himself tells us, by the Representations and Persuasions of a Set of Men, who endeavour'd to make him believe that he might acquire a large Fortune in a short Space of Time. He found himself, however, miserably mistaken, being egregiously duped by those Vultures, who preyed upon his Substance, 'till he had lost his All. He  
then

then set up a Lottery-Office in Conjunction with the last-mention'd Gentleman, but met with no great Success. However, he hath since that Time repaired his Fortune, and is now his Majesty's Vice-Consul for the *Austrian Netherlands*. He is a Person of excellent Sense, and great good Nature. As an Orator, indeed, he never shone much, a Heaviness of Aspect, and a Thickness of Utterance, still accompanying him. What he said was always worth hearing, but how he said it, was not worthy Imitation. His Piece, intituled, *Every Man his own Broker*, discovers him to be well versed in that mysterious Business, and to understand the Genius of our Language very well. He is now compiling a History of *England*.

Mr. THOMAS FL\*\*D.

**T**HIS Gentleman is a fine Scholar, an able Orator, a judicious Writer, and a good Christian. Not long since he took on him the sacred Function, and behaves with that amiable Dignity, and chearful Gravity, as reflects an Honour on the Cloth, and shews how worthy he is to wear it. Were the Number of such Clergymen

Clergymen: greater, it would not be so common as it now is, to hear Christianity ridiculed, and its Ministers treated with Contempt. He has not for some Years frequented the Society ; but formerly was very often there, and was an Ornament to it. The Speech which the Author of the ROBINHOOD SOCIETY, a *Satire*, has put in the Mouth of this Gentleman, whom he calls OTHO, on the Excellency of the Christian Religion, is so good, that I cannot refrain transcribing it.

HAIL, noble *Preses* ! Guide of Reas'ners, hail !  
 With thee my Speech begins, with thee shall end :  
 For Reason gave that Sceptre to thy Hand,  
 And eke her sacred Laws, that thou might'st still  
 The Voice of Infidelity, and check her Friends.  
 'Tis thine to speak the Dictates of thy Soul :  
 'Tis thine to lend an Ear when Justice bids  
 Another speak, and to enforce his Thoughts.  
 Thy Smile is Truth; and Error is thy Frown :  
 Yet will I speak what right my Soul esteems.  
 Fix'd is the Thought, and rivited by Time ;  
 By Time, which gives to Truth increasing  
     Charms,  
 And steals from Error all her borrow'd Plumes.

RELIGION, hail ! thou Guardian of our  
     Lives ;  
 Foundress of States ; of Law, Protectress fair ;  
 Virtue's strong Rock, and Reason's noblest Guide !  
                                     Without.

Without thy Aid each social Tie is lost :  
Without thy Aid the Laws would threat in vain :  
Without thy Aid this World were drown'd in  
Blood.

Freed from the Fear of Hell, or Hope of Heav'n,  
Life were a Load, and Being were a Curse.

When Misery, with Hope-destroying Stake,  
Impales the Wretch, and Horror wings the Soul,  
Thy Balm affords Relief, allays the Pain,  
And bids the harmless Weapon quit the Wound:  
When Fortune and when Plenty load the Board,  
Thou on the Altar of the human Heart.

Dost light a Flame, that, tow'ring to the Clouds,  
Exhales an Incense grateful to the Skies.

If Foes increase, thou bidd'st their Rancour end :  
If Dangers press, Faith lends her ample Shield,  
Defies their Threats, and frowns them into Bliss.  
E'en Death, that plucks the Planets from the  
Skies,

Owens thy superior Might, foregoes his Sting,  
And the proud Grave, victorious o'er our Clay,  
At thy Command his laurell'd Chaplet quits,  
Returns the Shrowd, and, growling, leaves his  
Prey.

SAY, mighty Reas'ners, Infidels baptiz'd,  
Who dress in Folly's Garb, yet idly dream  
That Wisdom's Robe upon your Shoulders shines ;  
Say, when tempestuous Passions tear the Soul,  
Cloud Reason's Beam, and put out Wisdom's  
Light ;

Can the thin Cobweb, spun by subtle Brains,  
Out-live the Storm, and dare the Tempest's Rage ?  
Yet



Yet, when to Reason's Aid Religion joins,  
 And in her Left Hand gives the redd'ning Bolt,  
 Or in her Right eternal Bliss configas,  
 Nor Life nor Death can move the stable Soul;  
 Nor Life nor Death impart, or Hope or Fear;  
 Unmov'd, we pass as *Israel's* Patriarch erst,  
 And make this World a Ladder to the Skies.

WORSHIP, whatever purblind Deists deem,  
 Worship's the noblest Converse of the Soul;  
 It opens Heav'n's irradiating Doors,  
 Admits us to the Audience of the GOD,  
 Makes him our Friend, and makes us truly  
 great.

Is it an Honour for the rustic Swain  
 To sit in Council with the sceptred Chief?  
 How great the Honour then to talk with him,  
 Who is the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords!

RELIGION shortens Sorrow's thorny Road,  
 Plucks from the Heart the Arrow of Despair;  
 Matures the Seeds of Virtue in the Soul;  
 Gives Reason Wings, and bids her scale the Skies,

MORE would I speak, but who, alas! can  
 sound  
 This vast Abyfs, or half its Stores exhaust?  
 Yet, in Obedience to thy sceptred Nod,  
 I stop the flowing Current of my Speech,  
 And glory in the Thoughts I have not spoke.

Mr.

Mr. JOSEPH C\*L\*\*\*R.

**T**HIS Gentleman is possessed of great good Sense, and many amiable Qualities. Fortune has not been very kind to him, but has reduced him to the mortifying Necessity of writing for Booksellers. Were there any other MECÆNAS's to be met with, it is probable that so much Merit would not go unnoticed and unrewarded. He is not very eminent as an Orator, an invincible Timidity still hanging on him, and preventing a Display of those Abilities, and that good Sense he is Master of. One would naturally imagine, that Knowledge should inspire a becoming Assurance; and a Consciousness of our being thorough Masters of a particular Subject, should make us speak to it, with an intrepid Spirit: But we often see the Reverse, and that Ignorance bolts forth its Dictates with a free and unconstrained Air, while Learning and Wisdom are shackled by the Fetters which awkward Bashfulness puts on them. Mr. C\*L\*\*\*R has not belonged to the Society for some Years; but after having attended it often enough to discern its Nature and Tendency, he thought he  
could

could neither be instructed or entertained,  
by going to it any more.

Mr. S \* \* T T.

**T**HIS Gentleman is a Physician of no small Eminence. He is a Man of great Erudition, a nervous Writer, and a fine Speaker ; though, in the Pronunciation of many Words, he deviates from the established Custom so much, as has subjected him to the Censures of many Critics, particularly the ingenious Authors of the *Connoisseur*, and the *Gray's-Inn Journal* ; the former by BONNEL THORNTON, Esq; and the latter by ARTHUR MURPHY, Esq; As a Specimen of his Oratory, and Turn of Thinking, we shall give a Speech he made some Years since, on the following Question.

*How are we to be certain of the Incorruptibility and Freedom of a Parliament ?*

Sign'd,

ARISTARCHUS.

“ THIS Question is undoubtedly, Mr.  
“ President, of no small Importance ;  
“ though whether it can be properly de-  
“ bated

“ bated in a Society like this, I much  
“ doubt. I don’t insinuate by this Obser-  
“ vation, that such Gentlemen of Genius  
“ and Judgment as honour us with their  
“ Company, are incapable of determining  
“ this Question, and ascertaining the  
“ Marks whereby we may judge and di-  
“ stinguish a free and incorrupt Parlia-  
“ ment from a venal and corrupt one ;  
“ but am afraid, very much afraid, that  
“ those Marks are not so easy to be point-  
“ ed out in any *extempore* Speech. To  
“ speak to a Question of this Nature pro-  
“ perly, requires a previous Consideration  
“ of the Subject, and a deliberate Thought  
“ of what we are to utter, lest a hasty  
“ Judgment, or crude Conjectures, might  
“ mislead instead of informing a candid  
“ Searcher after Truth. I shall, however,  
“ attempt to point out some Criterions to  
“ judge of a free and incorrupt Parlia-  
“ ment, which, I apprehend, may be  
“ looked on as infallible ; though I must  
“ necessarily omit others, perhaps not less  
“ important, which the Brevity of Time  
“ allowed me, will not permit my men-  
“ tioning.

“ A FREE and incorrupt Parliament the  
“ People will ever repose the utmost Con-  
fidence



“ fidence in, and though their Decisions  
 “ may be sometimes erroneous, they will  
 “ never be unjust. When this is the Case,  
 “ it will appear evidently by the following  
 “ Marks, *viz.*

“ WHEN the Members of Parliament  
 “ act with a visible Independency, and will  
 “ not suffer any one Man to lead them by  
 “ the Nose, or brow-beat them into Com-  
 “ pliance with his Schemes, and thereby  
 “ destroy that Equality which is essentially  
 “ requisite to preserve the Liberty of these  
 “ Assemblies.

“ WHEN all the Acts and Resolutions  
 “ of Parliament are manifestly calculated  
 “ for the public Good, and not to serve  
 “ any dark and private Purposes.

“ WHEN the Conduct of Gentlemen  
 “ in Employment makes it evident, that  
 “ they are under no Restraint in the  
 “ House, but are left at full Liberty to  
 “ give their Votes, upon all Occasions,  
 “ according to their Consciences and Opinions.

“ THIS is, indeed, the strongest Mark of  
 “ a free Parliament, and we may certainly  
 “ ly

“ ly conclude it to be the Case, when the  
“ Members, who are in Office, do not  
“ constantly run in Herds, and slavishly  
“ follow a Minister in all his Proposals;  
“ but when it is observed, on the con-  
“ trary, that they frequently divide against,  
“ what is called, the Court Party, and are  
“ not turned out of their Places, at the  
“ End of a Session, without any visible  
“ Reason, but giving a Vote, perhaps,  
“ against some favourite Question, or to  
“ make Room for others, whose only  
“ Merit is a sordid, pliant, and prostitute  
“ Complaisance.

“ IN short, Gentlemen, a Parliament  
“ cannot be truly denominated free, which  
“ lies under any Restraint or Discourage-  
“ ments whatsoever; nor will their Re-  
“ solutions have any other Weight than  
“ what Force gives them; for I will ven-  
“ ture to assert, that the most inconsider-  
“ able Minority, or even one honest  
“ Man, of the meanest Understanding,  
“ is a better Judge of political Affairs than  
“ the largest Majority, which is packed  
“ together, and bribed to serve the Pur-  
“ poses of a bad Minister.

“ BY viewing our own Parliament, and  
 “ having an Eye to the Marks and To-  
 “ kens I have pointed out, we may be  
 “ enabled to judge whether it is such a  
 “ one as mentioned in the Question. I  
 “ hope, I trust it is, and that it is quite  
 “ opposite to one I well remember, a few  
 “ Years ago, when the grand Corrupter  
 “ presided at the Helm. Under his Ad-  
 “ ministration Bribery and Corruption  
 “ were reduced to a *Susfetem*, Election-  
 “ Jobbing was carried on as openly as  
 “ any other Trade, all Virtue and Mo-  
 “ rality were laughed out of Countenance,  
 “ the interests of Religion were disregard-  
 “ ed, and its sacred Foundations under-  
 “ mined, and sapped by Vice and Vena-  
 “ lity. Nay, the great Engine of Cor-  
 “ ruption had so despicable an Opinion of  
 “ *human* Nature, that he laid it down as  
 “ an incontestible Truth, that no Man  
 “ could, in the true Sense of the Word,  
 “ deserve the Appellation of Patriot, *for*  
 “ *every Man had his Price*. I shall close  
 “ these Remarks with a beautiful Passage  
 “ from our great Poet, describing the Si-  
 “ tuation of Things at this Juncture, re-  
 “ marking, by the Way, that every  
 “ Thing was subservient to the Cause of  
 “ Vena-



“ Venality, and contracted, like the vari-  
“ ous Rays of the Sun, into one *Focus*,  
“ to feed this dark and infamous Passion.

VIRTUE may choose the high or low Degree,  
’Tis just alike to Virtue and to me;

Dwell in a Monk, or light upon a King,  
She’s still the same belov’d, contented Thing.

VICE is undone if she forgets her Birth,  
And sumps from Angels to the Dregs of Earth.  
But ’tis the Fall degrades her to a Whore ;  
Let Greatness own her, and she’s mean no more.  
Her Birth, her Beauty, Crowds and Courts confess ;  
Chaste Matrons praise her, and grave Bishops bless.  
In golden Chains the willing World she draws,  
And hers the Gospel is, and hers the Laws ;  
Mounts the Tribunal, lifts her scarlet Head,  
And sees pale VIRTUE carted in her stead.

Lo ! at the Wheels of her triumphal Car,  
Old *England*’s Genius, rough with many a Scar,  
Dragg’d in the Dust ! his Arms hang idly round :  
His Flag inverted trails along the Ground !

Our Youth, all liv’ry’d o’er with foreign Gold,  
Before her dance : behind her crawl the Old !

See thronging Millions to the Pagod run,  
And offer Country, Parent, Wife, or Son !  
Hear her black Trumpet thro’ the Land proclaim,  
That NOT TO BE CORRUPTED IS THE  
SHAME !

In Soldier, Churchman, Patriot, Man in Pow’r,  
’Tis Avarice all, Ambition is no more.

See all her Nobles begging to be Slaves !

See all her Fools aspiring to be Knaves !

The



The Wit of Cheats, the Courage of a Whore,  
 Are what ten thousand envy and adore :  
 All, all look up, with reverential Awe,  
 At Crimes that 'scape, or triumph o'er the Law :  
 While Truth, Worth, Wisdom, daily they decry—  
**NOTHING IS SACRED NOW BUT VIL-  
 LAINY.**

Yet shall this Verse, if such a Verse remain,  
 Shew there was one who held it in Disdain.

Mr. W \* \* T E.

**A** SCOTCH Schoolmaster, that has the  
 Brogue on him as strong as an  
*Highlander* just arrived from the bleak  
 Mountains of the North. He lives in  
*C——l-Street* in the *Strand*, and adver-  
 tises to each a just and graceful Pronunci-  
 ation ; for which he is indisputably well  
 qualified——we mean, of his native *Erse*,  
 but not of the *English*, which he cannot  
 himself pronounce so well as a Teague in  
 the County of *Tipperary*. He is, however,  
 a Man of good Sense, and possesses no small  
 Share of Learning ; but as an Orator, he  
 may be compared with the *Scotch* one men-  
 tioned by Mr. FOOTE, in his last Farce ;  
 and, indeed, it is not improbable, but that  
 in exposing the Absurdity of a Schoolmaster,  
 with a braod *Scotch* Accent, teaching an  
 elegant

elegant and graceful Pronunciation of *English*, the ingenious Satirist had Mr. W\*\*TE in his Eye.—It has frequently been observed, with surprise, that, in general, Schoolmasters are extremely subject to Vanity and Self conceit. But, I think, it is no great Wonder. They assume such a supercilious and haughty Air in their Schools, where, without Doubt, it is, in a great Measure, necessary, and contract such an Opiniatetry and Conceit of themselves, and their own Importance, as are not easily to be shaken off when they leave their native Dominions. The Force of Habit is very strong, and, without great Difficulty, cannot be conquered: But surely a Schoolmaster, when he leaves his School, ought to leave his stiff-starched Airs, and imaginary Consequence behind him, and come into Company with the Ease and Deportment of a Gentleman.—I mention these Things because the Person, whose Character I am now attempting, is a professed Votary to Self-Conceit; and imagines he is intitled to the same Respect and Homage without the Pale of his School, that he has an undoubted Right to exact within—But this, as I have before observed, is the Case with all of the Profession.

Mr. H \* \* H \* M.

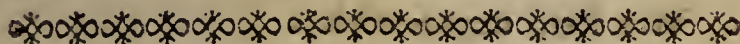
**A**UTHOR of *Genuine and authentic Memoirs of the ROBINHOOD SOCIETY*, and an *Oration in Praise of the LAW*, pronounced there a few Years ago, by one PITTARD, a strolling Actor. He is a Person of some Sense, but not half so much as he thinks he has. He has not attended the Society for some Years, nor, indeed, is the Loss of him very great; for, as he is to be ranked in the middling Class as an Author; so, as an Orator, he is a very mean one, unfurnished with Ideas, and destitute of a graceful Delivery.

End of the THIRD PART.

THE



THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
*Robinhood Society.*



PART IV.

WE have thus brought down our  
History of the ROBINHOOD  
SOCIETY, from its first Esta-  
blishment, to the Time of the  
Death or Seceſſion of ſeveral  
of its chief Members: To render it there-  
fore entirely complete, we ſhall now give  
*Memoirs and Characters* of its principal  
ſpeaking Members for the Year 1764.



THE Reader must consider, that we are now arrived at a very tender and delicate Part of this History: Living Characters are to be exhibited, and must therefore be drawn with so much Caution, that while the Reader is enabled to distinguish to whom the Features belong, the Persons themselves may have no just Cause to complain of our Severity. If, however, in some of our Portraits, the Features are homely, and in others very deformed, let it not be imputed to us as our Fault: We create not Features, or Characters, but paint them as we find them.

WE shall begin with

Mr. P \* T T.

THIS Person is consider'd of so much Importance in the Society, that he has frequently acted as President, in which Character he has appeared in a very singular Light. To draw a Comparison between J\*\*C\*\*KE and him, might appear invidious, and is certainly unnecessary; since every one that has seen each of them in the Chair but once, must have perceiv'd the

the Difference. He is by Trade a Cabinet Maker, and lives in *L—g A—e*. He was born at *Falmouth* in *Devonshire*; and tho' he has been settled in *London* some Years, he retains much of his Country Dialect. Whether he scorns the ignoble Path of Imitation, or whether having no Sense of what is proper and improper in the Conduct of others, he is an Original without Design, we are not enough acquainted with his Principles of Action to determine: But his Manner of opening and conducting the Debates of the Night, is, in all Respects, different from that of every other President of every Disputing-Club that we have either heard of, read of, or seen.

His first Movement is a very singular *Manœuvre*, or rather *Doit-OEuvre*: It is a deliberate Extension of the Fore-finger and Thumb of his Right-hand to that Part of the Candle which is inflam'd, and which he suddenly compresses between his said Fore-finger and Thumb, giving it a certain Pull, call'd by the *Romans*, *Vellicatio*: and by this *Doit-OEuvre*, he severs the said inflamed Part of the Candle exactly in the Middle, just as a School-boy severs a Half-penny Cake, for a Moiety of which

he has received a Farthing from one of his School-fellows; or, as a facetious old Gentleman divides and sub-divides the Fragments of a Tobacco-Pipe, while with circumstantial Exactness he relates some amorous Adventure of his youthful Days. After the useless Excrescence of the Candle is thus nicely vellicated, the worthy President casts it on the Floor, with a Grace similar to that, which one Poet says another exhibits with his Dung; and then, while Mirth sits on every Face, and sparkles in every Eye, wiping his aforesaid Fore-finger and Thumb upon his Leathern Breeches, or Black Everlasting Waistcoat, he cries out, “Will you be pleased;” “Gentlemen, *to order?*”

THE second Part of his great Work is, to open the Book of Questions, and acquaint the Society, that the *first* Question on the Book is the *next* Question they are to speak to for their Evening’s Entertainment. As a Specimen of his Oratory on this important Occasion, we have inserted the following Speech, which he made in *February 1764.*

“ GEN-

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ **T**HE *next* Question on the Book  
 “ for our Evening’s Debate, is a  
 “ *Thing* of Importance ; and it is this :  
 “ Whether a Lawyer or a *Sollier* is the  
 “ *most reputablest* Person ?——Pray, Gen-  
 “ tlemen, don’t laugh ; it is worded so  
 “ in the Question : Whether a Lawyer,  
 “ or a *Sollier*——Gentlemen, you may  
 “ laugh, if you please, but it is so here  
 “ (*pointing to the Book*)——Whether a  
 “ Lawyer or a *Sollier* is the *most reputa-*  
 “ *blest* Person ? There is no Occasion for  
 “ my explaining the Terms of the Que-  
 “ stion, for *it is easy of themselves*. The  
 “ Question, Gentlemen, is sign’d *Brit-*  
 “ *tannius*.——Pray, Gentlemen, don’t  
 “ laugh——It is against Order——*Bri-*  
 “ *tannicus* ! Well ; that’s the same Thing.  
 “ Is Mr. *Britannius* here ? If he is not, the  
 “ Question is to go from me as if ’twere  
 “ mine. Pray, Gentlemen, is Mr. *Bri-*  
 “ *tannius* here, Gentlemen ?——Pray,  
 “ Gentlemen, *to Order* ! This is against  
 “ Rule, Gentlemen, for Gentlemen to  
 “ laugh, and to shew their Mirth here.



“ Pray, Gentlemen, will you be pleased  
 “ *to Order*—Well, Gentlemen, as Mr.  
 “ *Britannius* is not here, it *oft* for to go  
 “ from me; and the Terms of it are  
 “ very easy, Gentlemen: You all know,  
 “ Gentlemen, What is meant by the  
 “ Question, which is, to know, which  
 “ is the *more reputabler* Profession, that  
 “ of the Lawyer, or the *Sollier*. Now,  
 “ as to a Lawyer, Gentlemen, I think,  
 “ the Term needs no Explanation, and  
 “ therefore I sha’n’t trespass on your Time  
 “ to tell you what it is: And as to a  
 “ *Sollier*, it is as easy to understand as  
 “ the other; and therefore the Question  
 “ may be *thoft* to be an Enquiry only,  
 “ which is the *preferabler*, a Lawyer, or  
 “ a *Sollier*. Now, there is no Doubt  
 “ but some Gentlemen will think the  
 “ Lawyer is the *eminenter* Man, and  
 “ others will think the *Sollier* is so; but  
 “ that will appear by the Debates. Now,  
 “ Gentlemen, I must needs say, that  
 “ for my own Part, I think a *Sollier* is  
 “ the most *cruellest* Man; because as  
 “ why; he carries Destruction and *Ruin-*  
 “ *ation* with his Sword, when he is or-  
 “ der’d by the General: But so you may  
 “ say, the Lawyer does likewise. It’s  
 “ true;

“ true ; but then People may avoid going  
 “ to Law, but not to War : And there-  
 “ fore, I *include*, the *Sollier* is the most  
 “ *cruellest*, and his Profession *frost* with  
 “ the greatest Mischief in general. A  
 “ *Sollier* is possessed with *Enthusiam*——  
 “ I say, *Enthusiam*——Pray, Gentle-  
 “ men, don’t laugh.——I say, a *Sollier*  
 “ is *toft* the Dictates of *Enthusiam*, and  
 “ he is a *worser* Character than a Lawyer,  
 “ though some People may say, that bad’s  
 “ the best. The most *commoneft* Thing  
 “ in the World is to hear both these  
 “ Characters *traducified*——Pray, Gentle-  
 “ men, don’t laugh. Gentlemen, pray,  
 “ *to Order*——You are guilty of great  
 “ *Irregulation*——Gentlemen, if you don’t  
 “ behave better, I shall desire your Com-  
 “ pany out of the Room——Well: Does  
 “ any Gentlemen here choose to speak  
 “ to the Question? Do *you* choose to  
 “ speak to it, Sir? Does any Gentleman  
 “ on this Side of the Way choose to give  
 “ us his Sentiments? What No-body  
 “ speak to it, Gentlemen! Why, Gen-  
 “ tlemen, it’s not a *difficulter* Question  
 “ than we usually have for our *Discussa-*  
 “ *tion*——Pray, Gentlemen, *to Order*——I  
 “ say, it’s not a more *difficulter* Question  
 “ than.

“ than many are that are proposed for  
 “ our *Discussion*—Why, Gentlemen,  
 “ you should n’t laugh; you know what  
 “ I mean; besides, I am a *Falmouth*  
 “ Man; from *Falmouth*, Gentlemen, in  
 “ *Devonshire*; and you must not expect  
 “ my *Pronunciation* to be the most *per-*  
 “ *fectest*, for they all talk there as I do  
 “ here—Pray, Gentlemen, don’t laugh!  
 “ —Does any one chuse to speak to  
 “ the Question? Oh, a Gentleman is  
 “ *up*—Pray, Gentlemen, be silenced.”

WE shall next give a Character of a  
 Gentleman very well known in the So-  
 ciety, by the Name of

MR. S \* \* T H.

**T**HIS Gentleman is by Trade a Dyer,  
 and in Religion a red-hot *Antimonian*.  
 When he bellows forth his peculiar No-  
 tions, his Eyes are inflamed, and his whole  
 Body seems to be the Mansion of some  
 turbulent Spirit. He is no tame Orator,  
 nor wants for Choice of Words, but is  
 so unhappy in the Application of them,  
 that he conveys a quite different Meaning  
 to



to the Minds of the Auditors from what he himself understands: Let the Question be what it will, he lugs in Religion by the Head and Shoulders, and the most carnal Proposition is spiritualized into the most divine Meaning: Thus, the secret Parts of Religion are all peeped into and exposed, and Discourses in the Style of the *Canticles*, proposed as proper for Imitation. S\*\*TH is a great Admirer of WHITEFIELD, and thinks him one of the greatest Men in *Europe*. If Regard is extorted, and Esteem rivetted, by a mutual Sympathy of Minds, and a similar Turn of Thinking, it is no Wonder our Orator should have conceived an high Opinion of his Brother Orator: And, indeed, their Oratory is not much unlike, for Orator S\*\*TH is as ranting, as unintelligible, and as enthusiastic, as Orator WH\*\*F\*\*\*D.

As to the Abilities of this curious Gentleman, they may be easily guessed at from what we have said, and to dwell longer on such a Character, would be to intimate he was of more Importance than he really is. However, we should ill discharge our Duty of giving competent  
Ideas.



Ideas of our Orators, did we not draw their leading Features ; though we pretend not to be so particular as to paint all of them.

Mr. B \* \* K \* R.

**T**HIS Gentleman is a Physician, and lately lived at *Trowbridge* in *Wilts*, but now resides in *London*. He is a Man of extensive Knowledge, and strict Probity, and is almost the only Orator in the ROBINHOOD SOCIETY that speaks to a Question ; the Imagination of the major Part of those Gentlemen being either so exalted, as to carry them into the Clouds, or so groveling, as to put them on a Level with Coblers and Tinkers : The Question itself is seldom adverted to ; and the End of their speaking during the six Minutes allow'd them, seems to be merely to shew that they are endued with one Faculty, which other Animals do not possess.

Mr.

Mr. RICHARD M\*C\*\*L\*Y.

A PROFESSED Deist, and an Orator without Ideas, and with a very affected and vicious Pronunciation. His Notions of Religion are intirely borrowed from COLLINS, HOBBS, and TYNDALL, and his Oratory from *Billingsgate*. He was formerly a Tobacconist, but is now Clerk to a Linnen-Draper.

Mr. C \* \* D \* \* L.

A BRAZIER in Business, and a Deist in Principle; illiterate to the last Degree, and as void of good Manners as of good Sense. His Voice resembles a Sow-gelder's Horn, or a Crier of wild Beasts at a Country Fair. Need I say more of such a worthy Member of so worthy a Society?

Mr.

Mr. V \* N \* B \* \* S.

**A**N Attorney, or an Attorney's Clerk, that pours out Volleys of Nonsense, as fast as a *London* Militia Platoon fire their Muskets. He is a professed Advocate for all ministerial Measures, and endeavours to prove, by Logic and Noise, that Ministers, like Kings, can do no Wrong. If his Opponents insist, that if they *can* do no Wrong, they must be infallible, and Infallibility only is the Attribute of GOD; he answers, they are infallible, and are appointed by GOD; so that the divine indefeasible Right of Kings, with all its concomitant Circumstances of Non-Resistance and Passive Obedience, are strongly enforced by this ingenious Quill-driver in every Political Debate. If it is objected to him, that the *Jure Divino* is a Doctrine that strikes at the Vitals of our present Constitution, by tacitly declaring the glorious Revolution to be an Usurpation, and the present illustrious House of *Hanover*, to be mere P\*\*t\*\*d\*\*s to the Throne, he will not dispute the Inference, but maintain his Position.—So much for his Political Notions. As to his religious ones, he

he is not less strenuous. He thinks the Church, established by Law in this Kingdom, not only the best visible Church on Earth, but that it is absolutely without Spot or Blemish; and he would have as implicit a Regard paid to all human Ordinances and Ceremonies as to the most divine Precepts; and in consequence of these very orthodox and very charitable Opinions, he thinks all who dissent from the established Church, *should immediately quit England, and reside elsewhere*: But to what Place they are to retire he does not inform us. As to the Deists, he lashes them without Mercy, and pronounces it impossible for them to be useful Subjects, or honest Men; and therefore, as they cannot be serviceable in a State, they should be banished from it, or broke upon the Wheel, or, at least, be kept in Prison to hard Labour, till their Minds are open to Conviction, and prepared to believe the glorious Truths of the Gospel.

It is with no small Difficulty we have fathomed these Sentiments of our Man of Law; who brings together such a Cloud of unmeaning Words, that it requires a very penetrating Eye to see through the Obscurity: That Eye we think we possess.

As



As an Orator, he is extremely contemptible : His Action is forced, violent, and unnatural, and his Pronunciation, which is very vicious, is made more disagreeable by his stammering. His Mind seems stored with very few Ideas, and those few, very wrong ones. His mental Optics are extremely defective , and he views Things by such broken and refracted Rays, as render them scarcely visible. It is no Wonder, therefore, that he should not be able to make his Auditors fully perceive what he does not clearly behold himself. In a Word, his Character is well expressed in Mr. POPE's Parody of a Passage in DENHAM's *Cooper's-Hill*, describing the River *Thames* :

Flow, Wellsted, flow ! like thine Inspirer, Beer,  
Tho' stale, not ripe, tho' thin, yet never clear ;  
So sweetly mawkish, and so smoothly dull :  
Heady, not strong ; o'erflowing, tho' not full.

A Specimen of his Oratory is given in the following little Speech which he made on this Question,

*Who*

*Whether the Robinhood Society has not a  
visible Tendency to improve our Morals,  
and refine our Taste !*

BRITANNICUS.

“ MR. PRESIDENT !

“ I REALLY must be of the affirmative  
“ Side of this Question, though—aw—aw  
“ —the Gentleman yonder in the Cut  
“ Wig has—aw—aw—declared himself—  
“ aw—aw—of a contrray Opinion. A  
“ contrary Opinion, I say, Mr. President.  
“ Mr. President, — aw — aw — I really  
“ think—aw—aw—that this Society—aw  
“ —aw—this Society I say, —aw—aw  
“ —does tend—aw—to refine our Mo-  
“ rals, and—aw—aw—to improve our  
“ Taste. To improve our Taste—aw—  
“ aw—is a noble Work, and—aw—aw  
“ —useful to Society. Society is benefit-  
“ ed by it ; that is, Mr. President. But  
“ aw—aw—there is another Advantage  
“ —aw—aw—our Society has, and that  
“ is, that we acquire Eloquence, and  
“ with that—aw—aw—get Wives ; be-  
“ cause we—aw—aw—charm them with  
“ the Music of—aw—aw—our Tongues,  
“ and they cannot—aw—aw—resist us.”

WE

WE must inform the Reader, that tho' the Speaker of this Speech has attended the Society several Years, his Eloquence has not yet procured him a Wife. We can also assure him, that the Speech itself is genuine, having taken it down *verbatim*, in Short-hand, at the Time of its Delivery.

WE shall dwell no longer on this Gentleman than just to observe, that he is extremely culpable in speaking out of Turn, entering into personal Altercations, and answering every Observation that glances on himself, which greatly obstructs the Debates, throws the Society into Disorder, and only manifests the Author's Petulance of Temper.

Mr. A. M. E. C \* \* K E.

SOME Readers will wonder what Mystery is couched under the Letters A. M. E. and some will suppose that they are no more than the Initials of Mr. C\*\*KE's Christian Names—His Christian Name is THOMAS; but since a certain Operation he perform'd on himself, he  
has,

has, in his numerous Writings, intituled himself A. M. E. C\*\*KE; Letters, which though unintelligible to the Public, are yet full of Meaning to us, who have a great Intimacy with this Gentleman; and they signify ADAM, MOSES, EMANUEL.—So much for his adopted Name.

HE was born in *Northumberland*, receiv'd a liberal Education there, and from thence was sent to *Oxford*: In due Time he enter'd into Orders, return'd to his native County, and was soon after presented with a pretty good Living. A Turn for Mysteries led him to a Perusal of some of our mystic Writers, and he caught the same enthusiastic Flame which warm'd them. A recluse and sedentary Life greatly cherish'd his Notions, and it was not long before Parson C\*\*KE was look'd on by all the Country as a second JACOB BEHMEN. But he had some Notions peculiar to himself. He maintain'd in his Sermons, and in his private Conversation, that the *Jewish* Ceremonies were not abrogated by the Christian Dispensation, but were still of universal Obligation. In particular, he insisted on the Necessity of Circumcision, and supported his Doctrine by his own Practice. Such novel Notions,  
and



and such extravagant Behaviour in a Protestant Clergyman, soon reached the Ears of the Bishop of the Diocese, and he was deprived, and his Living given to another. Our *Jewish* Christian then came to *London*, and commenced Author; but his unintelligible Jargon not selling, he was reduced to great Distress. In this Dilemma he knew not what to do; but, at last, put in Practice another odd Notion, that the Goods of Fortune ought to be shared in common by all God's Creatures..

AMONG various Expedients for satisfying his Hunger formed upon this Plan, one was, to resort to some well-frequented Coffee-house, and placing himself at a Table, to appropriate to his own Use the first buttered Muffin and Pot of Coffee that was brought to it. This he would often be permitted to do, without any Interruption from the Gentlemen that sat near him, some of whom were diverted, and some astonished, to see a Clergyman thus familiarly regale himself with a Breakfast that was not provided for him. As soon as it was finished, however, he would rise from the Table, say a short Grace, and very unconcernedly make towards the Door; and, when questioned by the  
Master

Master of the Coffee-house, about the Impropriety of using that which he did not order, and the Injustice of not paying for it when he had done, he would prove by Mode and Figure, that the good Things of this World ought to be in common. The Bucks and Bloods enjoyed the Joke, and a Ring was usually formed for the two Disputants, the Parson and the Coffee-man; but the Coffee-man being unable to invalidate the Testimonies brought out of the *Talmud*, and many learned Writings, which were quoted in *Hebrew*, *Greek* and *Latin*, the Parson always came off victorious.

ANOTHER Practice by which this Gentleman signalized himself, was Street-Precaching; and having for some Time before let his Beard grow, he was generally known by the Name of *The Bearded Priest*. In this extravagant Manner he went on for some Time, 'till some Clergymen made Interest for him to be sent to *Bedlam*, where he was confined for about two or three Years. As soon as he was released, he took a Resolution of going to *Scotland*, and actually travelled over that Country on Foot, with not a single Farthing in his Pocket, subsisting,  
as

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as himself informs us in one of his Pamphlets, by the Contributions of the well-disposed. From thence he went to *Ireland*, and travelled over a great Part of that Kingdom; and on his Arrival at *Dublin*, in 1760, was entertained by some Gentlemen in *Trinity College*, who, compassionating the melancholy Case of a Clergyman in Distress, gave him his Board and Lodging *gratis*. After he had staid here a few Months, and published some very *original* Pieces, which no one could understand but himself, he return'd to *England*, visited *Oxford*, and then came again to *London*, where he now resides, but intends going to *America*, as soon as his Finances will enable him.

Mr. S T \* \* \* T.

**A** YOUNG Surgeon, that possesses much Knowledge, and speaks with uncommon Propriety and Correctness. He has not long frequented the Society, and comes there, apparently, more with a View of being diverted, than the Hopes of being edified.

Mr.

Mr. W \* \* L \* \* G S.

**A** JUDICIOUS, humane, and honest Man. He is a Druggist by Profession, and lives in the *Poultry*. As an Orator, he is neither excellent, nor contemptible. His Reasoning is close, nervous, and always to the Point. His Sentiments are judicious, orthodox, and pure, and breathe the true Spirit of Christianity, which inspires an unrestrained Benevolence towards the whole human and animal Species, and is not angry with those who differ in speculative Opinions, that little interest the moral Conduct of Mankind. This Gentleman, however, seldom comes to the ROBINHOOD, but is a constant Attendant at the *Queen's Arms Society* in *Newgate Street*, a Society formed on much the same Plan, but conducted with infinitely greater Decorum. He is also a President of that Society, and fills the Chair with Honour.

Mr.



Mr. W \* \* H \* \* \* L L.

COMMONLY called *the good-natured Calvinist*. Why he is called so, I own, is to me a Mystery; as his pious Fury is breathed forth with an unextinguishable Spirit against those who differ from him in Opinion; particularly the Roman Catholics and the Deists. I need not say more of him, than that with Respect to his Oratory, and many of his Sentiments, he is a second Edition of Mr. S\* \* T H, the *Antinomian*. He is an Exciseman by Profession.

Mr. B R \* \* M \* N.

A RED-hot Papist, with little Judgment, and less Charity, whose *Yorkshire Wife perverted* him to the Roman Catholic Religion. Furious, persecuting, and revengeful, he is himself an Epitome of his Church, and exhibits a true Picture of a rigid Roman Catholic. By Profession he is a School-master, and lives in *Little Russel Street*, near B———y S———; but if the Pedagogue does not excel the Orator,

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Orator, he is contemptible to the last Degree.

Mr. G \* \* D \* \* \* T H.

A MAN of Learning and Judgment; Author of *An Inquiry into the modern State of Literature in EUROPE*, and many other ingenious Works; a good Orator, and a candid Disputant, with a clear Head, and an honest Heart. He comes but seldom to the Society.

Mr. W \* L K \* R.

A COMEDIAN belonging to the Theatre in *Covent Garden*, a Man of extreme good Sense, Erudition, and Candor. He greatly excels as an Orator, having a full, round, and strong Voice; a Facility of Utterance, a graceful Pronunciation, and a beautiful Action. If Wit, as it has been defined by a great Poet, consists in a quick Conception, and an easy Delivery, Mr. W \* L K \* R has a great Share of it. We have been much surpris'd at the low Estimation this Gentleman is held in here, as an Actor. We have seen him perform

K

very

very capital Characters at the Theatre-Royal in *Crow-Street, Dublin*, with great Judgment and Execution, and with universal Applause; and must own we are at a Loss to what to impute his being placed on *Covent-Garden Stage* in a different and inferior Walk.

Mr. WILLIAM H \* \* \* \* S.

THE Clerk of the Society, who takes Care that the Disputants are duly supplied with Porter and Lemonade, to refresh their Spirits, and enable them to speak with Clearness and Energy. He lives in *Barbican*, keeps a Chandler's Shop there, is a Porter also at the *India Warehouse*, is a very honest Man, and is possessed of good natural Abilities.

Mr. B \* \* D \* \* G T \* N.

A DEIST with Respect to his *irreligious* Notions, of tolerable good Sense, and full of Words; so that though he cannot be said to be a deep Philosopher, he may be considered as a flashy ROBINHOOD Orator.

Mr.

Mr. P \* \* E.

A MAN that, by his Oddity of Aspect, and Peculiarity of Expression, has attracted the public attention in a considerable Degree ; for he has been frequently honoured by being made the Subject of some Essays in our daily Papers.

HE was born at *Exeter* about fifty-eight Years ago, of poor, but, as it is said, honest Parents, who sent him to School, where he learnt both to read and write. At the Age of thirteen he was apprenticed there to a Shoemaker, and during his Apprenticeship, took great Delight in reading the delectable Poems of WITHERS, QUARLES, HERBERT, CLEVELAND, and other *very great* Authors, and read them so frequently, that he got many of them by Heart. At the Expiration of his Apprenticeship, he came to *London*, and having received some small Pittance from his Friends, set up for himself in the *Strand*, took unto him a Wife, and had four or five Children by her. So far we see the bright View of his Life's History. But the World soon frowned



## 196 *The* HISTORY of

on him; and though he was continually  
 “ supplying his Knowledge-Box with  
 “ Furniture,” as himself elegantly ex-  
 presses it, by reading the before-mentioned  
 Authors, and attending constantly at Mr.  
 Orator HENLEY’s Chapel, to whom he  
 was Mouth-Piece, running on his Errands,  
 praising his Oratory, and doing him other  
 Services, yet his Stock in Trade, his  
 Household Goods, his Customers, and his  
 Reputation, were decreasing daily. Altho’  
 Poverty now not only stared our Orator  
 in the Face, but was his constant Compa-  
 nion, yet was he indefatigable in the Im-  
 provement of his Mind, and bore his  
 Misery with great Patience. But his *Rib*  
 possessed not the same Fortitude. She  
 lamented her Infelicity in very pathetic  
 Terms, and Tears ran from her Eyes in  
 copious Streams. P\*\*\* beheld her Distress  
 with the Apathy of a Stoic; he answered  
 her Complaints and Remonstrances with  
 some Verses of QUARLES, and her Tears  
 he endeavoured to dry up with some Sen-  
 timents from HERBERT or CLEVELAND:  
 but all would not avail; her Tongue  
 still ran on, and her Tears still flowed.  
 She wanted more substantial Food, than  
 dull Lines of Jingle; and had rather see  
 some Bread and Cheese, and small Beer  
 on

on the Table, for herself and Children, than hear the best Arguments in the World, to prove that *whatever is, is right*. Upbraidings and severe Reproaches followed, and the Wife insisted, that the Husband was an idle Fellow, who neglected his Business, and the most important Concerns, merely to prate about Things he did not understand, and to attend the Atheistical Orator, whose Discourses he could never be benefitted by. After living some Years in this uncomfortable State, the Wife and Children left the Husband to his Fate, and pursued their own. The Wife took decent Lodgings, sought out for Business in Washing and Plain-Work, and succeeded so well, that she bred up her Children properly, wanted for nothing, and lived happily. As to our Son of CRISPIN, he took a paltry Lodging, and went on in the same idle Manner as before, getting what Work he could, and putting it out to be performed. In this Manner he has continued for some Years.

As to the Oratory of this *Poetical Cobler*, as he is usually called, it is,

———*Rudis, indigestaque moles,  
Non bene junctarum discordia semina rerum.*

HIS Speeches do not consist of his own Sentiments on the Question, but only of an Application of the Sentiments of those polite Authors he is most conversant with. He is, indeed, a mere Retailer of other Men's Opinions, and his Orations are like an *Harlequin's* patched Coat ; and yet he has Vanity enough to think himself a Man of great Knowledge ; and takes the Laugh of Contempt, which he frequently hears at the Society, for a Proof of their Approbation.

HIS Speech on this Question,

*Whether Eloquence is of Use to Society ?*  
CICERO.

exhibits a very ample and striking Specimen of his Oratory.

“ MR. PRESIDENT !

“ THAT there Gentleman, on this  
 “ Side of the Way, seems to want a  
 “ Light to be struck into his Knowledge-  
 “ Box : If he had opened the Trap-Doors  
 “ of his Mind, it might have entered in.  
 “ But I find it has not ; and therefore,  
 “ his

“ his Understanding wants snuffing. He  
“ has really spoke like a Crabb-Lantern,  
“ and a Snap-Jack ; so I have done with  
“ him. *Howfunderver*, I shall now take  
“ Notice of the other rum Gentleman,  
“ who thought I was a Man of Fortune,  
“ in his speaking to the last rum Question,  
“ in so rum a Manner.

*But tho' I in this Scarlet Coat appear,  
I am not worth a single Groat a Year.*

“ So much for him—As to the Question,  
“ Mr. President, I think it is no Question  
“ at all ; for every one that has not De-  
“ traction in the Head, and Prejudice in  
“ the Heart, must own and confess,

*That Words alone can Harmony impart,  
To charm th' Attention, and command the Heart*

“ And that is Eloquence, Mr. President,  
“ and such as must be admitted by all who  
“ do not seek the Indulgence of their vo-  
“ racious Appetites : And

*Which Heads refin'd alone by Reason know,  
Where Sense and Judgment do together flow.*

“ Reason, Mr. President, is King Na-  
K 4 “ ture's



“ ture’s Privy Counsellor ; and Eloquence  
 “ is to teach us

*To reason down the Fever of the Blood,  
 And sooth with Words the Tumult of the  
 Soul.*

“ I wish the Gentleman in his own Hair,  
 “ yonder, who is now picking his Teeth,  
 “ and who looks with three Eyes at me,  
 “ had marshalled up his Thoughts, har-  
 “ monized his Understanding, regulated  
 “ his Ideas, and informed his Judgment ;  
 “ then he might.

*Blow away, and speak at large,  
 And with a holy Violence ram down the Charge.*

“ Instead of which he has taken hold of the  
 “ Muzzle instead of the But-End of the  
 “ Doctrine, and hurried a half-formed  
 “ Production on the Public.

*He has launch’d forth quite into wild Ex-  
 tremes,  
 Of senseless Noise, and undistinguish’d Themes.*

“ *Howsumdever*, Mr. President, I for-  
 “ give him for his *Fun-Dawsit* on me ;  
 “ especially, as his Thoughts is stagnated,  
 “ and

“ and an Embargo laid on his Under-  
“ standing : For,

*Forgiveness to the Injur'd does belong ;  
They never pardon that have done the Wrong.*

“ Eloquence, Mr. President, may be de-  
“ fined to be, as it were, as when a Man  
“ is eloquent ; and to be so, he ought to  
“ do as I do ; that is, drink a good deal  
“ of Gin, and avoid eating Onions. A  
“ great Poet says ;

*Immortal Gin ! since I have sung thy Praise,  
Crown me with Juniper instead of Bays,*

“ And that is Eloquence itself, Mr. Pre-  
“ sident ; and no one will dispute it that  
“ has poised *their* Understanding, and not  
“ violated the Dignity of human Nature.  
“ Those who dispute it, like my Wife's  
“ Relations,

*May the Curse of G— then light on one and  
all,  
To d— their Bodies, but preserve their Soul.*

“ As to that Gentleman that said Elo-  
“ quence is hurtful to Society, because  
“ Poets are eloquent, and, in consequence

“ of it, poor, it by no Means follows ;  
 “ *howsumdever*,

*If Thought alone the Appetite can cloy,  
 Could Poets live, Camalion-like, on Air ;  
 If neither Thirst or Hunger could annoy,  
 The poorest Poet never need despair.*

“ So that this Gentleman’s Speech was a  
 “ false Motion, Mr. President, and the  
 “ Question topped his Understanding ;  
 “ *howsumdever*, he chose to speak to it,  
 “ lest he should over-gorge himself, and  
 “ burst at the Touch-hole. Another  
 “ Gentleman, who said as how Elo-  
 “ quence was pernicious, seems to have  
 “ contracted all his Senses into his Bow-  
 “ sprit, to have loaded his Head with Ar-  
 “ gument, and then to have primed, cock-  
 “ ed, and fired away ; *howsumdever*, I  
 “ excuse him, because I find he is one of  
 “ the cross-legged Knights of the Steel-  
 “ Bar, and a Wit. But Mr. POPE says,

*A Wit’s a Feather, and a Chief’s a Rod ;  
 An honest Man’s the noblest Work of GOD.*

“ Eloquence, Mr. President, is the Gift  
 “ of the SUPREME ; and we *oft* not to  
 “ despise any of his Gifts : Now, if I had  
 “ the

“ the Wisdom of ULYSSES, the Arms of  
“ ACHILLES, the Riches of CROESUS,  
“ and the Wisdom of SOLOMON,

*I'd scower the Universe from Folly and from  
Vice,  
And make this World a second Paradise.*

“ But I fear it's impossible for me to  
“ do this, though, with Eloquence, one  
“ might almost do any Thing, even if  
“ one were attacked both in Front and  
“ Flank, and knocked down in the Rear.  
“ But I think that those should,

*Who strive to discompose th' exalted Mind,  
Be to eternal Banishment confin'd.*

“ And some of these there are in this So-  
“ ciety, who are for interrupting me in  
“ my Discourse very often ; but they had  
“ better open the Casements of their Bo-  
“ dies to let in Light to their Minds, as I  
“ do ; for I always

*Do much desire and long to know,  
The Wit that from Choice Spirits flow.*

“ Mr. President ! I see your all-silencing  
“ Hammer is lifted up to knock me  
“ down



“ down ; but I shall just desire to relate a  
 “ Fact, which I know to be true, of the  
 “ public Crier at *Topsham* in *Devonshire*,  
 “ which I consider as a very good Piece of  
 “ Eloquence. He had no less than ten  
 “ Children ; and they becoming charge-  
 “ able to the Parish, he was required by  
 “ the Church-wardens to get no more,  
 “ and used barbarously for those he had ;  
 “ whereupon he went into the Market-  
 “ place, took his Bell in his Hand, rung  
 “ it, and then said, *O Yes !—O Yes !—O*  
 “ *Yes !—This is to give Notice,*

*That when Breeches and Petticoats do come  
 near,  
 Flesh and Blood cannot forbear.*

“ This was wielding the sacred Weapon,  
 “ and making the Muse to flow, and I  
 “ think he acted right in all Respects ;  
 “ for Mr. POPE says,

*The Goods of Fortune variously are giv'n ;  
 A Wife is the peculiar Gift of Heav'n.*

“ He doesn't say two, Mr. President.  
 “ But I see the uplifted, all-silencing  
 “ Hammer again fills your Hand, and  
 “ threatens my Head ; and therefore I  
 “ must

“ must conclude. But, Mr. President,  
“ give me Leave to mention a bad Cus-  
“ tom in this Society, which is to shew  
“ Marks of their *Approbation* or *Dis-*  
“ *approbation*: Now, Mr. President, I  
“ never clap the Speakers, for fear of  
“ p\*x\*\*g their Understandings; and yet,  
“ I’ll work, walk, or talk, as much for  
“ a Shilling, as any Lawyer or Parson in  
“ *England* will for a Guinea.”

WITH this Character we shall close our Account of the principal Speakers of the ROBINHOOD SOCIETY; an Account, that though written without Embellishment, is not destitute of Fidelity and Candour. Uninfluenced by any private Views, we have neither indulged Resentment by wanton Censure, nor, for the Sake of personal Attachments, prostituted Praise.

OF the general Character of the Society, and its Influence on the Minds of young Persons, little has been said: And while we were lately ruminating on the Manner in which we should conclude this great Work, a Friend, who had perused our Manuscript, came in; and, after knowing the Subject of our Meditations, thus warmly expostulated upon it.

“ THERE

“ THERE can be no Doubt in what  
 “ Light the Society must appear to every  
 “ Mind, whose Judgment is not determin-  
 “ ed by Fancy and Passion, but by the  
 “ Nature and Tendency of Principles and  
 “ Actions demonstrated by Facts. From  
 “ the History you have given of the Socie-  
 “ ty, it is evident, that it maintained its  
 “ Usefulness and Honour no longer, than  
 “ while it faithfully adhered to that fun-  
 “ damental Law of its Institution, by which  
 “ all religious Questions were excluded  
 “ from the Subjects of Debate.

“ WHEN, for the Diffusion of useful  
 “ Knowledge, it was thought expedient  
 “ to admit every Person that chose to  
 “ come, and, for that Purpose, to assem-  
 “ ble at a Public-House; if two or three  
 “ Hours had been set apart for the Busi-  
 “ ness of the Night, and no eating drink-  
 “ ing or smoaking had been permitted in  
 “ that Interval; and, if the Subjects of  
 “ Debate had been confined to the Trade  
 “ and Manufactures of *Great Britain*, to  
 “ Natural History, the Mathematics, and  
 “ the Liberal Arts; how poorly would  
 “ the Meetings of the Society have been  
 “ attended! Though its Credit might  
 “ have



“ have remained, its Number would not  
“ have been much increased. But, as soon  
“ as it was known, that the Drunkard  
“ and the Glutton might regale them-  
“ selves at the Expence of the Temperate,  
“ and that every illiterate Prater might  
“ display his Oratory, and signalize him-  
“ self as the Champion of Deism or Chri-  
“ stianity ; the Society was immediately  
“ crowded with noisy Butchers, Tinkers,  
“ and Coblers ; with self-conceited and  
“ frontless Infidels ; with those not less  
“ profane, though more inconsistent, *Ari-*  
“ *ans* and *Socinians* ; and with the most  
“ contentious, and yet the worst Dis-  
“ puters about Christianity, *Calvinists* and  
“ *Antinomians*. The first Principles of  
“ Religion, and the essential Doctrines of  
“ the Gospél, were called in Question  
“ every Night in the Presence of young  
“ People, who unhappily deviating in their  
“ Search after Truth and Goodness, were  
“ here betrayed into Error, and shut up  
“ from the Sight of That, by which alone  
“ Sin can be destroyed and Holiness re-  
“ stored.

“ THE *Book of Questions*, as you have  
“ represented it, is itself a sufficient  
“ Proof of the licentious and even wan-  
“ ton



“ ton Levity, with which the most sacred  
 “ Doctrines and Characters have been  
 “ treated: In the Specimen of Religious  
 “ Questions which, you say, you have  
 “ selected from that Book, there were  
 “ two, which I was compelled to strike  
 “ out, to save myself from being a Par-  
 “ taker in the Guilt of the most horrid  
 “ Blasphemy. And he, who, by his  
 “ Presence, has contributed to support a  
 “ Society, in which such Questions are  
 “ suffered to be proposed, registered, and  
 “ debated, has so far contributed to the  
 “ Support of Profaneness and Impiety.  
 “ From this Charge I exempt not even  
 “ THE BAKER himself, who is intitled  
 “ to no higher Honour from his long  
 “ Presidentship, than that of keeping a  
 “ rude Multitude in some external Order,  
 “ and preserving the Regularity of an  
 “ Infidel-Disputation.

“ MANY Things, indeed, are called  
 “ Religion that do not belong to it; but  
 “ that which is essential in Religion, is  
 “ private and personal, subsisting not in  
 “ disputable Notions and refined Ar-  
 “ guments, but in the Sensibilities and  
 “ Perceptions of the Heart: For who,  
 “ in his Senses, can dispute a Moment  
 “ whether

“ whether he is a Sinner? and who, that  
“ feels himself a Sinner, can dispute a  
“ Moment whether he should receive or  
“ reject the Pardon that is offered him?  
“ and who can depend upon the Pardon  
“ of Sin, any further than he feels in his  
“ Heart a Principle disapproving, dis-  
“ owning, resisting and subduing the  
“ Power of Sin? And yet what is more  
“ prevalent in all our *Societies for Free*  
“ *Debate and Inquiry*, than the Folly and  
“ Madness of attempting to destroy these  
“ Sensibilities, to stifle these Convictions,  
“ and to prove, by Logical Disputation,  
“ that Man is now as he was originally  
“ made; that he is, therefore, no Sin-  
“ ner; and that, consequently, he need-  
“ eth no Redeemer. But he, who  
“ abandons that penitential and humbling  
“ Sense of Sin, and that endearing Sense  
“ of pardoning Mercy, which the Chri-  
“ stian Redemption awakens in every  
“ Heart; and endeavours to persuade  
“ himself, that he can be set free from  
“ his Evil and Misery, and made good  
“ and happy, by Definitions, or Axioms,  
“ or Forms, or Systems, or any Thing  
“ less than the Renovation of a Divine  
“ Life; abandons that for which the  
“ whole

“ whole Creation cannot yield him a  
 “ Recompence.

“ OF the Nature and Tendency of all  
 “ these *Societies for free Debate and In-*  
 “ *quiry*, the Writer of *THE ADVEN-*  
 “ *TURER* has expressed his Sentiments  
 “ with just Indignation.

“ NOTHING (*says he*) has offended  
 “ memore, than the Manner in which Sub-  
 “ jects of eternal Moment are often treat-  
 “ ed. To dispute on Moral and Theological  
 “ Topics, is become a Fashion; and it  
 “ is usual with Persons, of whom it is  
 “ no Reproach to say they are ignorant,  
 “ because their Opportunities of gaining  
 “ Knowledge have been few, to deter-  
 “ mine with the utmost confidence upon  
 “ Questions to which no human Intellect  
 “ is equal. In almost every Tavern and  
 “ every Alehouse, illiterate Petulance  
 “ prates of Fitness and Virtue, of Free-  
 “ dom and Fate; and it is common to  
 “ hear Disputes concerning everlasting  
 “ Happiness and Misery, the Mysteries  
 “ of Religion and the Attributes of GOD,  
 “ intermingled with Lewdness and Blas-  
 “ phemy, or at least treated with wanton  
 “ Negligence and absurd Merriment.

“ FOR



“ FOR Lewdness and Blasphemy, it is  
“ hoped no Apology will seriously be of-  
“ fered: And it is probable, that if the  
“ Question in Debate was, which of the  
“ Disputants should be hanged on the  
“ Morrow, it would be conducted with  
“ Decency and Gravity, as a Matter of  
“ some Importance: That visible good  
“ Humour, and that noble Freedom, of  
“ which they appear to be so fond, would  
“ be thought not well to agree with their  
“ Subject; nor would either of the Gen-  
“ tlemen be much delighted, if an Argu-  
“ ment intended to demonstrate that he  
“ would, within a few Hours, be sus-  
“ pended on a Gibbet, should be embel-  
“ lished with a witty Allusion to a Button  
“ and Loop, or a jocular Remark, that  
“ it would effectually secure him from  
“ future Accidents, either by Land or  
“ Water: And yet the Justice and Mercy  
“ of OMNIPOTENCE, the Life and Death  
“ of the Soul, are treated with Ridicule  
“ and Sport; and it is contended, that  
“ with Ridicule and Sport, they ought  
“ always to be treated.

“ BUT the Effect, as well as the Man-  
“ ner of those fashionable Disputes, is  
“ always



“ always ill : They tend to establish what  
 “ is called Natural Religion, upon the  
 “ Ruins of CHRISTIANITY ; and a Man  
 “ has no sooner stiled himself a Moral  
 “ Philosopher, than he finds that his Duty  
 “ both to GOD and Man, is contracted  
 “ into a very small Compass, and may  
 “ be practised with the greatest Facility.  
 “ Yet, as this Effect is not always appa-  
 “ rent, the Unwary are frequently delu-  
 “ ded into fatal Error, and imagine they  
 “ are attaining the highest Degree of  
 “ Moral Excellence, while they are in-  
 “ sensibly losing the Principles upon which  
 “ alone Temptation can be resisted, and  
 “ a steady Perseverance in well-doing,  
 “ secured.

“ AMONG other favourite and unsus-  
 “ pected Topics, is the EXCELLENCY  
 “ OF VIRTUE. Virtue is said necessarily  
 “ to produce its own Happiness, and to  
 “ be constantly and adequately its own  
 “ Reward ; as Vice, on the contrary,  
 “ never fails to produce Misery, and in-  
 “ flict upon itself the Punishment it de-  
 “ serves ; Propositions, of which every  
 “ one is ready to affirm, that they may  
 “ be admitted without Scruple, and be-  
 “ lieved without Danger. But from hence  
 “ it

“ it is inferred, that future Rewards and  
“ Punishments are not necessary, either  
“ to furnish adequate Motives to the  
“ Practice of Virtue, or to justify the  
“ Ways of GOD: In Consequence of  
“ their being not necessary, they become  
“ doubtful; the DEITY is less and less  
“ the Object of Fear and Hope; and as  
“ Virtue is said to be that which produces  
“ ultimate Good below, whatever is sup-  
“ posed to produce ultimate Good below,  
“ is said to be Virtue: Right and wrong  
“ are confounded, because remote Con-  
“ sequences cannot perfectly be known;  
“ the principal Barrier by which Appe-  
“ tite and Passion are restrained, is broken  
“ down. The Remonstrances of Con-  
“ science are overborne by Sophistry;  
“ and the acquired and habitual Shame of  
“ Vice is subdued by the perpetual Efforts  
“ of vigorous Resistance.”

“ THE Paper which contains this Pas-  
“ sage, seems to have been written as an  
“ Introduction to the Story of poor DICK  
“ FREEMAN, related by himself under  
“ the assumed Name of OPSINOUS. And  
“ as that Story is a forcible Instance of  
“ the unhappy Influence of *Disputing-*  
“ *Clubs*, and may strike those whom  
“ Persuasion

“ Persuasion will not reach, I think you  
 “ cannot do better than print it as a Con-  
 “ clusion to your History of the ROBIN-  
 “ HOOD SOCIETY.”

THUS ended my Friend, whose Opinion upon this Matter I have made public, as the best Reason for my taking his Advice. The Story he recommends, is as follows.

*To the* A D V E N T U R E R.

*S I R,*

OF all the Expedients that have been found out to alleviate the Miseries of Life, none is left to despair but Complaint: And though Complaint, without Hope of Relief, may be thought rather to increase than mitigate Anguish, as it collects every Circumstance of Distress, and imbitters the Memory of past Sufferings by the Anticipation of future; yet, like weeping, it is an Indulgence of that which it is Pain to suppress, and soothes with the Hope of Pity the Wretch who despairs of Comfort. Of this Number is he who now addresses you: Yet the Solace of Complaint and the Hope of Pity, are not the only Motives that have induced me



me to communicate the Series of Events, by which I have been led on in an insensible Deviation from Felicity, and at last plunged in irremediable Calamity : I wish that others may escape Perdition ; and am, therefore, solicitous to warn them of the Path, that leads to the Precipice from which I have fallen.

I AM the only Child of a wealthy Farmer, who, as he was himself illiterate, was the more zealous to make his Son a Scholar, imagining, that there was in the Knowledge of Greek and Latin, some secret Charm of perpetual Influence, which, as I passed through Life, would smoothe the Way before me, establish the Happiness of Success, and supply new Resources to Disappointment. But not being able to deny himself the Pleasure he found in having me about him, instead of sending me out to a Boarding-School, he offered the Curate of the Parish ten Pounds a Year and his Board, to become my Tutor.

THIS Gentleman, who was in Years, and had lately buried his Wife, accepted the Employment, but refused the Salary : The Work of Education, he said, would agreeably fill his Intervals of Leisure, and  
happily



happily coincide with the Duties of his Function: But he observed that his Curacy, which was thirty Pounds a Year, and had long subsisted him when he had a Family, would make him wealthy now he was a single Man; and therefore he insisted to pay for his Board: To this my Father, with whatever Reluctance, was obliged to consent. At the Age of six Years I began to read my Accidence under my Preceptor, and at fifteen had gone through the Latin and Greek Classics. But the Languages were not all that I learned of this Gentleman; besides other Science of less Importance, he taught me the Theory of CHRISTIANITY by his Precepts, and the Practice by his Example.

As his Temper was calm and steady, the Influence which he had acquired over me, was unlimited: He was never capriciously severe; so that I regarded his Displeasure not as an Effect of his Infirmary, but of my own Fault: He discovered so much Affection in the Pleasure with which he commended, and in the tender concern with which he reproved me, that I loved him as a Father; and his Devotion, tho' rational and manly, was yet so habitual and fervent, that I revered him as a Saint.

Saint. I found even my Passions controuled by an Awe which his Presence impressed ; and, by a constant Attention to his Doctrine and Life, I acquired such a Sense of my Connexion with the invisible World, and such a Conviction of the Consciousness of DEITY to all my Thoughts, that every inordinate Wish was secretly suppressed, and my Conduct regulated by the most scrupulous circumspection.

MY Father thought he had now taken sufficient Care of my Education, and therefore began to expect that I should assist in overlooking his Servants, and managing his Farm, in which he intended I should succeed him : But my Preceptor, whose principal View was not my temporal Advantage, told him, that, as a Farmer, great Part of my Learning would be totally useless ; and that the only Way to make me serviceable to Mankind, in Proportion to the Knowledge I had acquired, would be to send me to the University, that at a proper Time I might take Orders. But my Father, besides that he was still unwilling to part with me, had probably many Reasons against my entering the World in a Cassock : Such,

L

however,

however, was the Deference which he paid to my Tutor, that he had almost implicitly submitted to his Determination ; when a Relation of my Mother's, who was an Attorney of great Practice in the *Temple*, came to spend part of the long Vacation at our House, in consequence of Invitations which had been often repeated during an Absence of many Years.

My Father thought that an Opportunity of consulting how to dispose of me with a man so well acquainted with Life, was not to be lost ; and perhaps he secretly hoped, that my Preceptor would give up his Opinion as indefensible, if a Person of the Lawyer's Experience should declare against it. My Cousin was accordingly made Umpire in the Debate ; and after he had heard the Arguments on both Sides, he declared against my becoming a Farmer : He said it would be an Act of Injustice to bury my Parts and Learning in the Obscurity of Rural Life ; because, if produced to the World, they would probably be rewarded with Wealth and Distinction. My Preceptor imagined the Question was now finally determined in his Favour ; and being obliged to visit one of his Parishioners that was sick, he gave me a Look  
of



of Congratulation as he went out, and I perceived his Cheek glow with a Flush of Triumph, and his Eye sparkle with Tears of Delight.

BUT he had no sooner left the Room, than my Cousin gave the Conversation another Turn : He told my Father, that though he had opposed his making me a Farmer, he was not an Advocate for my becoming a Parson ; for that, to make a young Fellow a Parson, without being able to procure him a Living, was to make him a Beggar. He then made some witty Reflections on the old Gentleman who was just gone out : “ Nobody (*he said*) “ could question his having been put to a “ bad Trade, who considered his Circum- “ stances now he had followed it forty “ Years.” And after some other sprightly Sallies, which, though they made my Father laugh, made me tremble, he clapped him upon the Shoulder, “ If you have a “ Mind your Boy should make a Figure “ in Life, old Gentleman, (*says he*) put “ him Clerk to me : My Lord Chancellor “ *King* was no better than the Son of a “ Country Shop-keeper ; and my Master “ gave a Person of much greater Eminence “ many a Half-crown, when he was an



“ Attorney’s Clerk in the next Chambers  
 “ to mine. What say you ? Shall I take  
 “ him up with me or no ? ” My Father,  
 who had listened to this Proposal with great  
 Eagerness, as soon as my Cousin had done  
 speaking, cried, “ A Match ; ” and im-  
 mediately gave him his Hand in Token of  
 his Consent. Thus the Bargain was  
 struck, and my Fate determined before my  
 Tutor came back.

It was in vain that he afterwards ob-  
 jected to the Character of my new Ma-  
 ster, and expressed the most dreadful  
 Apprehensions at my becoming an Attor-  
 ney’s Clerk, and entering into the Society  
 of Wretches who had been represented to  
 him, and perhaps not unjustly, as the most  
 Profligate upon Earth : They do not, in-  
 deed, become worse than others, merely  
 as Clerks ; but as Persons who, with more  
 Money to spend in the Gratification of Ap-  
 petite, are sooner than others abandoned to  
 their own Conduct : For, though they  
 are taken from under the Protection of a  
 Parent, yet, being scarce considered as in  
 a State of Servitude, they are not suffi-  
 ciently restrained by the Authority of a  
 Master.

My

MY Father had conceived of my Cousin as the best natured Man in the World, and, probably, was intoxicated with the Romantic Hope of living to see me upon the Bench in *Westminster-Hall*, or of meeting me upon the Circuit, lolling in my own Coach, and attended by a Crowd of the inferior Instruments of Justice. He was not therefore to be moved, either by Expostulation or Intreaty ; and I set out with my Cousin on Horseback, to meet the Stage at a Town within a few Miles, after having taken Leave of my Father, with a Tenderness that melted us both ; and received from the hoary Saint his last Instructions and Benediction, and at length the parting Embrace, which was given with the silent Ardour of unutterable Wishes, and repeated with Tears that could no longer be suppressed or concealed.

WHEN we were seated in the Coach, my Cousin began to make himself merry with the Regret and Discontent that he perceived in my Countenance, at leaving a Cow-house, a Hog-stye, and two old Grey-pates, who were contending whether I should be buried in a Farm or a College. I, who had never heard either my Father

or my Tutor treated with Irreverence, could not conceal my Displeasure and my Resentment : But he still continued to rally my Country Simplicity with many Allusions, which I did not then understand, but which greatly delighted the rest of the Company. The fourth Day brought us to our Journey's End ; and my Master, as soon as we reached his Chambers, shook me by the Hand, and bid me welcome to the *Temple*.

HE had been some Years a Widower, and his only Child, a Daughter, being still at a Boarding-school, his Family consisted only of a Man and Maid Servant, and myself ; for, though he had two hired Clerks, yet they lodged and boarded themselves. The horrid Lewdness and Profaneness of these Fellows terrified and disgusted me ; nor could I believe that my Master's Property and Interest could be safely intrusted with Men who, in every Respect, appeared to be so destitute of Virtue and Religion : I therefore thought it my Duty to apprise him of his Danger ; and accordingly one Day, when we were at Dinner, I communicated my Suspicion, and the Reason upon which it was founded. The formal Solemnity with which I introduced this Conversation, and the Air of impor-

importance which I gave to my Discovery, threw him into a violent Fit of Laughter, which struck me dumb with Confusion and Astonishment. As soon as he recovered himself, he told me, that though his Clerks might use some Expressions that I had not been accustomed to hear, yet he believed them to be very honest; and that he placed more Confidence in them, than he would in a formal Prig, of whom he knew nothing but that he went every Morning and Evening to Prayers, and said Grace before and after Meat; that, as to swearing, they meant no Harm; and, as he did not doubt but that every young Fellow liked a Girl, it was better they should joke about it than be hypocritical and sly: not that he would be thought to suspect my Integrity, or to blame me for Practices which he knew to be merely Effects of the Bigotry and Superstition, in which I had been educated, and not the Disguises of Cunning, or the Subterfuges of Guilt.

I was greatly mortified at my Cousin's Behaviour on this Occasion, and wondered from what Cause it could proceed, and why he should so lightly pass over those



Vices in others, from which he abstained himself ; for I had never heard him swear ; and as his Expressions were not obscene, I imagined his Conversation was chaste ; in which, however, my Ignorance deceived me, and it was not long before I had Reason to change my Opinion of his Character.

THERE came one Morning to enquire for him at his Chambers, a Lady, who had something in her Manner which caught my Attention, and excited my Curiosity : Her Cloaths were fine, but the Manner in which they were put on, was rather flaunting than elegant ; her Address was not easy nor polite, but seemed to be a strange Mixture of affected State and licentious Familiarity : She looked in the Glass while she was speaking to me, and without any Confusion adjusted her Tucker ; she seemed rather pleased than disconcerted, at being regarded with Earnestness ; and being told, that my Cousin was abroad, she asked some trifling Questions, and then making a light Curtsey, took up the Side of her Hoop with a Jerk, that discovered at least half her Leg, and hurried down Stairs.

I COULD

I COULD not help enquiring of the Clerks, if they knew this Lady ; and was greatly confounded when they told me, with an Air of Secrecy, that she was my Cousin's Mistress, whom he had kept almost two Years in Lodgings near *Covent-Garden*. At first I suspected this Information ; but it was soon confirmed by so many Circumstances, that I could no longer doubt of its Truth.

As my Principles were yet untainted, and the Influence of my Education was still strong, I regarded my Cousin's Sentiments as impious and detestable ; and his Example rather struck me with Horror, than seduced me to Imitation. I flattered myself with Hopes of effecting his Reformation, and took every Opportunity to hint the Wickedness of allowed Incontinence ; for which I was always rallied when he was disposed to be merry, and answered with the contemptuous Sneer of Self-sufficiency, when he was sullen.

NEAR four Years of my Clerkship were now expired, and I had never yet entered the Lists as a Disputant with my Cousin : For tho' I conceived myself to be much

his Superior in Moral and Theological Learning; and though he often admitted me to familiar Conversation, yet I still regarded the Subordination of a Servant to a Master, as one of the Duties of my Station, and preserved it with such exactness, that I never exceeded a Question or a Hint, when we were alone, and was always silent when he had Company; tho' I frequently heard such Propositions advanced, as made me wonder that no tremendous Token of the Divine Displeasure immediately followed: But coming one Night from the Tavern, warm with Wine, and, as I imagined, flushed with Polemic Success, he insisted upon my taking one Glass with him before he went to Bed; and almost as soon as we were seated, he gave me a formal Challenge, by denying all DIVINE REVELATION, and defying me to prove it.

I now considered every Distinction as thrown down, and stood forth as the Champion of Religion, with that Elation of Mind which the Hero always feels at the Approach of Danger. I thought myself secure of Victory; and rejoicing that he had now compelled me to do what I had often wished he would permit, I obliged him.

him to declare that he would dispute upon equal Terms, and we began the Debate. But it was not long before I was astonished to find myself confounded by a Man, whom I saw half drunk, and whose Learning and Abilities I despised when he was sober; for as I had but very lately discovered, that any of the Principles of Religion, from the Immortality of the Soul to the deepest Mystery, had been so much as questioned, all his Objections were new. I was assaulted where I had made no Preparation for Defence; and having not been so much accustomed to Disputation, as to consider, that in the present Weakness of Human Intellects, it is much easier to object than to answer, and that in every Disquisition, Difficulties are found which cannot be resolved, I was overborne by the sudden Onset, and in the Tumult of my Search after Answers to his Cavils, forgot to press the positive Arguments on which Religion is established: He took Advantage of my Confusion, proclaimed his own Triumph, and, because I was depressed, treated me as vanquished.

As the Event which had thus mortified my Pride, was perpetually revolved in my Mind, the same Mistake still continued:

I en-



I enquired for Solutions instead of Proofs, and found myself more and more entangled in the Snares of Sophistry. In some other Conversations which my Cousin was now eager to begin, new Difficulties were started, the Labyrinth of Doubt grew more intricate, and as the Question was of infinite Moment, my Mind was brought into the most distressful Anxiety. I ruminated incessantly on the Subjects of our Debate, sometimes chiding myself for my Doubts; and sometimes applauding the Courage and Freedom of my Enquiry.

WHILE my Mind was in this State, I heard by Accident that there was a Club at an Alehouse in the Neighbourhood, where such Subjects were freely debated, to which every Body was admitted without Scruple or Formality: To this Club in an evil Hour I resolved to go, that I might learn how knotty Points were to be discussed, and Truth distinguished from Error.

ACCORDINGLY, on the next Club-Night, I mingled with the Multitude that was assembled in this School of Folly and Infidelity: I was at first disgusted at the gross Ignorance of some, and shocked at the  
the

the horrid Blasphemy of others; but Curiosity prevailed, and my Sensibility by Degrees wore off. I found that almost every Speaker had a different Opinion, which some of them supported by Arguments, that to me, who was utterly unacquainted with Disputation, appeared to hold opposite Probabilities in exact Equipoise; so that, instead of being confirmed in any Principle, I was divested of all; the Perplexity of my Mind was increased, and I contracted such a Habit of questioning whatever offered to my Imagination, that I almost doubted of my own Existence.

IN Proportion as I was less assured in my Principles, I was less circumspect in my Conduct: But such was still the Force of Education, that any gross Violence offered to that which I had held sacred, and every Act which I had been used to regard as incurring the Forfeiture of the DIVINE FAVOUR, stung me with Remorse. I was, indeed, still restrained from flagitious Immorality, by the Power of Habit: But this Power grew weaker and weaker, and the natural Propensity to Ill gradually took Place, as the Motion that is communicated to a Ball which is struck up into the Air, becomes every  
Moment

Moment less and less, 'till at Length it recoils by its own Weight.

FEAR and Hope, the great Springs of Human Action, had now lost their principal Objects, as I doubted whether the Enjoyment of the present Moment was not all that I could secure; my Power to resist Temptation diminished with my Dependance upon the GRACE OF GOD, and Regard to the Sanction of his Law; and I was first seduced by a Prostitute, in my Return from a Declamation on the BEAUTY of Virtue, and the Strength of the MORAL SENSE.

I BEGAN now to give myself up intirely to Sensuality, and the Gratification of Appetite terminated my Prospects of Felicity. That Peace of Mind, which is the Sunshine of the Soul, was exchanged for the Gloom of Doubt, and the Storm of Passion; and my Confidence in GOD, and Hope of everlasting Joy, for sudden Terrors and vain Wishes, the Loathings of Satiety, and the Anguish of Disappointment.

I WAS, indeed, impatient under this Fluctuation of Opinion, and therefore I applied



applied to a Gentleman, who was a principal Speaker at the Club, and deemed a profound Philosopher, to assist the Labours of my own Mind in the Investigation of Truth, and relieve me from Distraction by removing my Doubts: But this Gentleman, instead of administering Relief, lamented the Prejudice of Education, which he said hindered me from yielding without Reserve to the Force of Truth, and might perhaps always keep my mind anxious, though my Judgment should be convinced. But as the most effectual Remedy for this deplorable Evil, he recommended to me the Works of CHUBB, MORGAN, and many others, which I procured and read with great Eagerness; and though I was not at last a sound Deist, yet I perceived with some Pleasure, that my Stock of Polemic Knowledge was greatly increased; so that, instead of being an Auditor, I commenced a Speaker at the Club: And though to stand up and babble to a Crowd at an Alehouse, 'till Silence is commanded by the Stroke of a Hammer, is as low an Ambition as can taint the human Mind; yet I was much elevated by my new Distinction, and pleased with the Deference that was paid to my Judgment. I sometimes, indeed, reflected, that I was propagating



pagating Opinions, by which I had myself become vicious and wretched : But it immediately occurred, that though my Conduct was changed, it could not be proved that my Virtue was less, because many Things which I avoided as vicious upon my old Principles, were innocent upon my new. I therefore went on in my Career, and was perpetually racking my Invention for new Topics and Illustrations ; and among other Expedients, as well to advance my reputation, as to quiet my Conscience, and deliver me from the Torment of Remorse, I thought of the following.

HAVING learned that all Error is innocent, because it is involuntary, I concluded that nothing more was necessary to quiet the Mind, than to prove that all Vice was Error : I therefore formed the following Argument : “ No Man becomes vicious, but from a Belief that Vice will confer Happiness : He may, indeed, have been told the contrary ; but implicit Faith is not required of reasonable Beings : Therefore, as every Man ought to seek Happiness, every Man may lawfully make the Experiment : If he is disappointed, it is plain that he did not intend

“ intend that which has happened ; so  
“ that every Vice is an Error, and there-  
“ fore no Vice will be punished.”

I COMMUNICATED this ingenious Contrivance to my Friend the Philosopher, who, instead of detecting the Difference between Ignorance and Perverseness, or stating the Limitations within which we are bound to seek our own Happiness, applauded the Acuteness of my Penetration, and the Force of my Reasoning. I was impatient to display so novel and important a Discovery to the Club, and the Attention that it drew upon me, gratified my Ambition to the utmost of my Expectation. I had, indeed, some Opponents; but they were so little skilled in Argumentation, and so ignorant of the Subject, that it only rendered my Conquest more signal and important ; for the Chairman summed up the Arguments on both Sides, with so exact and scrupulous an Impartiality, that as I appeared not to have been confuted, those who could not discover the Weakness of my Antagonists, thought that to confute me was impossible ; my Sophistry was taken for Demonstration, and the Number of Profelytes was incredible. The Assembly consisted chiefly of  
Clerks

Clerks and Apprentices, young Persons who had received a religious, though not a liberal Education; for those who were totally ignorant, or wholly abandoned, troubled not themselves with such Disputations as were carried on at our Club: And these unhappy Boys, the Impetuosity of whose Passions was restrained chiefly by Fear, as Virtue had not yet become a Habit, were glad to have the Shackles struck off, which they were told Priestcraft had put on.

BUT however I might satisfy others, I was not yet satisfied myself; my Torment returned, and new Opiates became necessary: They were not, indeed, easily to be found; but such was my good Fortune, that an illiterate Mechanic afforded me a most seasonable Relief, “ by discussing the  
“ important Question, and demonstrating  
“ that the Soul was not, nor could be  
“ immortal.” I was, indeed, disposed to believe without the severest Scrutiny, what I now began secretly to wish; for such was the State of my Mind, that I was willing to give up the Hope of everlasting Happiness, to be delivered from the Dread of perpetual Misery; and as I thought of dying as a remote Event, the  
Appre-



Apprehension of losing my Existence with my Life, did not much interrupt the Pleasures of the Bagnio and the Tavern.

THEY were, however, interrupted by another Cause; for I contracted a Distemper, which alarmed and terrified me, in Proportion as its Progress was swift, and its Consequences were dreadful. In this Distress, I applied to a young Surgeon, who was a Speaker at the Club, and gained a genteel Subsistence by keeping it in Repair: He treated my Complaint as a Trifle; and to prevent any serious Reflections in this Interval of Pain and Solitude, he rallied the deplorable Length of my Countenance, and exhorted me to behave like a Man.

MY Pride, rather than my Fear, made me very solicitous to conceal this Disorder from my Cousin; but he soon discovered it rather with Pleasure than Anger, as it compleated his Triumph, and afforded him a new Subject of Raillery and Merri-ment. By the Spiritual and Corporeal Assistance of my Surgeon, I was at Length restored to my Health, with the same dissolute Morals, and a Resolution to pursue



sue my pleasures with more Caution: Instead, therefore, of hiring a Prostitute, I now endeavoured to seduce the Virgin, and corrupt the Wife.

IN these Attempts my new Principles afforded me great Assistance: For I found that those whom I could convert, I could easily debauch; and that to convert many, nothing more was necessary than to advance my Principles, and allege something in Defence of them, by which I appeared to be convinced myself; for not being able to dispute, they thought that the Argument which had convinced me, would, if they could understand it, convince them: So that, by yielding an implicit Assent, they at once paid a Compliment to their own Judgment, and smoothed the Way to the Indulgence of Appetite.

WHILE I was thus gratifying every inordinate Desire, and passing from one Degree of Guilt to another, my Cousin determined to take his Daughter, who was now in her nineteenth Year, from School; and as he intended to make her Mistress of his Family, he quitted his Chambers, and took a House.

THIS

THIS young Lady I had frequently seen, and always admired ; she was therefore no sooner come home, than I endeavoured to recommend myself by a thousand Affiduities, and rejoiced in the many Opportunities that were afforded me to entertain her alone, and perceived that she was not displeased with my Company, nor insensible to my Complaisance.

MY Cousin, though he had seen the Effects of his Documents of Infidelity in the Corruption of my Morals, yet could not forbear to sneer at Religion in the Presence of his Daughter ; a Practice in which I now always concurred, as it facilitated the Execution of a Design that I had formed of rendering her subservient to my Pleasures. I might, indeed, have married her, and, perhaps, my Cousin secretly intended that I should : But I knew Women too well to think that Marriage would confine my Wishes to a single Object ; and I was utterly averse to a State in which the Pleasure of Variety must be sacrificed to domestic Quiet, or domestic Quiet to the Pleasure of Variety ; for I neither imagined that I could long indulge myself in an unlawful Familiarity  
with

with many Women, before it would by some Accident be discovered to my Wife; nor that she would be so very courteous or philosophical, as to suffer this Indulgence without Expostulation and Clamour; and besides, I had no Liking to a Brood of Children, whose Wants would soon become importunate, and whose Claim to my Industry and Frugality, would be universally acknowledged; though the Offspring of a Mistress might be abandoned to Beggary, without Breach of the Law, or Offence to Society.

THE young Lady, on the contrary, as she perceived that my Addresses exceeded common Civilities, did not question but that my View was to obtain her for a Wife; and I could discern that she often expected such a Declaration, and seemed disappointed that I had not yet proposed an Application to her Father: But imagining, I suppose, that these Circumstances were only delayed 'till the fittest Opportunity, she did not scruple to admit all the Freedoms that were consistent with Modesty; and I drew every Day nearer to the Accomplishment of my Design by insensible Approaches, without alarming her Fear, or confirming her Hopes.

I KNEW

I KNEW that only two Things were necessary ; her Passions were to be inflam'd, and the Motives from which they were to be suppressed, removed. I was therefore perpetually insinuating, that nothing which was natural, could be ill ; I complained of the Impositions and Restraints of Priestcraft and Superstition ; and, as if these Hints were casual and accidental, I would immediately afterwards sing a tender Song, repeat some seducing Verses, or read a Novel.

BUT, henceforward, let never insulted Beauty admit a second Time into her Presence the Wretch, who has once attempted to ridicule Religion, and substitute other Aids to human Frailty, for that “ Love of GOD which is better than “ Life,” and that Fear “ which is the “ Beginning of Wisdom :” For whoever makes such an Attempt, intends to betray ; the contrary Conduct being without Question the Interest of every one whose Intentions are good, because even those who profanely deny Religion to be of DIVINE Origin, do yet acknowledge that it is a Political Institution, well calculated to strengthen the Band of Society, and to  
keep



keep out the Ravager, by intrenching Innocence and arming Virtue. To oppose these Corrupters by Argument rather than Contempt, is to parley with a Murderer, who may be excluded by shutting a Door.

My Cousin's Daughter used frequently to dispute with me, and these Disputes always favoured the Execution of my Project: Though, lest I should alarm her too much, I often affected to appear half in Jest; and when I ventured to take any Liberty, by which the Bounds of Modesty were somewhat invaded, I suddenly desisted with an Air of easy Negligence; and as the Attempt was not pursued, and nothing farther seemed to be intended than was done, it was regarded but as Wag-gery, and punished only with a Slap or a Frown. Thus she became familiar with Infidelity and Indecency by Degrees.

ONCE subtly engaged her in a Debate, whether the Gratification of natural Appetites was in itself innocent, and whether, if so, the Want of external Ceremony could in any Case render it criminal. I insisted that Virtue and Vice were not influenced by external Ceremonies, nor founded upon human Laws, which were  
arbitrary,

arbitrary, temporary, and local: And that as a young Lady's shutting herself up in a Nunnery, was still evil, though enjoined by such Laws; so the transmitting her Beauty to Posterity was still good, though under certain Circumstances it had by such Laws been forbidden. This she affected utterly to deny, and I proposed that the Question should be referred to her Papa, without informing him of our Debate, and that it should be determined by his Opinion; a Proposal to which she readily agreed. I immediately adverted to other Subjects, as if I had no Interest in the Issue of the Debate; but I could perceive that it sunk deeply into her Mind, and that she continued more thoughtful than usual.

I DID not fail, however, to introduce a suitable Topic of Discourse the next Time my Cousin was present, and having stated the Question in general Terms, he gave it in my Favour, without suspecting that he was Judge in his own Cause; and the next Time I was alone with his Daughter, without mentioning his Decision, I renewed my Familiarity; I found her Resistance less resolute, pursued my Advantage, and completed her Ruin.

M

WITHIN

WITHIN a few Months she perceived that she was with Child ; a Circumstance that she communicated to me with Expressions of the most piercing Distress : But instead of consenting to marry her, to which she had often urged me with all the little Arts of Persuasion that she could practice, I made Light of the Affair, chid her for being so much alarmed for so trivial an Accident, and proposed a Medicine which I told her would effectually prevent the Discovery of our Intercourse, by destroying the Effect of it before it could appear. At this Proposition she fainted, and when she recovered, opposed it with Terror and Regret, with Tears, Trembling and Intreaty : But I continued inflexible, and at Length either removed or over-ruled her Scruples, by the same Arguments that had first seduced her to Guilt.

THE long Vacation was now commenced, and my Clerkship was just expired : I therefore proposed to my Cousin, that we should all make a Visit to my Father, hoping that the Fatigue of the Journey would favour my Purpose, by increasing the Effect of the Medicine, and accounting for an Indisposition which it might be supposed to cause.

THE



THE Plan being thus concerted, and my Cousin's Concurrence being obtained, it was immediately put in Execution. I applied to my old Friend the Club Surgeon, to whom I made no Secret of such Affairs, and he immediately furnished me with Medicaments, which he assured me would answer my Purpose; but either by a Mistake in the Preparation, or in the Quantity, they produced a Disorder, which, soon after the dear injured unhappy Girl arrived at her Journey's End, terminated in her Death.

MY Confusion and Remorse at this Event, are not to be expressed: but Confusion and Remorse were suddenly changed into Astonishment and Terror; for she was scarce dead before I was taken into Custody, upon Suspicion of Murder. Her Father had deposed, that just before she died, she desired to speak with him in private; and that then, taking his Hand, and intreating his Forgiveness, she told him that she was with Child by me, and that I had poisoned her, under Pretence of preserving her Reputation.



WHETHER she made this Declaration, or only confessed the Truth, and her Father, to revenge the Injury, had forged the rest, cannot now be known; but the Coroner having been summoned, the Body viewed, and found to have been pregnant, with many Marks of a violent and uncommon Disorder, a Verdict of Wilful Murder was brought in against me, and I was committed to the County Gaol.

As the Judges were then upon the Circuit, I was within less than a Fortnight convicted and condemned by the Zeal of the Jury, whose Passions had been so greatly inflamed by the Enormity of the Crime with which I had been charged, that they were rather willing that I should suffer being innocent, than that I should escape being guilty; but it appearing to the Judge, in the Course of the Trial, that Murder was not intended, he reprieved me before he left the Town.

I MIGHT now have redeemed the Time, and, awakened to a Sense of my Folly and my Guilt, might have made some Reparation to Mankind for the Injury which I had  
done

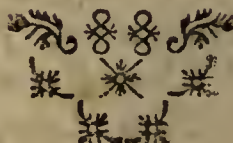
done to Society; and endeavoured to rekindle some Spark of Hope in my own Breast, by Repentance and Devotion. But, alas! in the first Transports of my Mind, upon so sudden and unexpected a Calamity, the Fear of Death yielded to the Fear of Infamy, and I swallowed Poison: The Excess of my Desperation hindered its immediate Effect; for, as I took too much, great Part of it was thrown up, and only such a Quantity remained behind, as was sufficient to insure my Destruction, and yet leave me Time to contemplate the Horrors of the Gulph into which I am sinking.

IN this deplorable Situation I have been visited by the Surgeon, who was the immediate Instrument of my Misfortune, and the Philosopher who directed my Studies: But these are Friends who only rouse me to keener Sensibility, and inflict upon me more exquisite Torment. They reproach me with Folly, and upbraid me with Cowardice; they tell me too, that the Fear of Death has made me regret the Errors of Superstition; but what would I now give for those erroneous Hopes, and that credulous Simplicity, which, though I have been taught to despise them, would sustain

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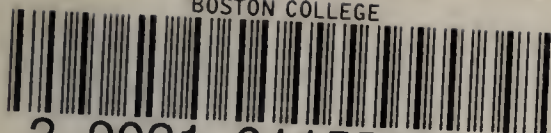






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